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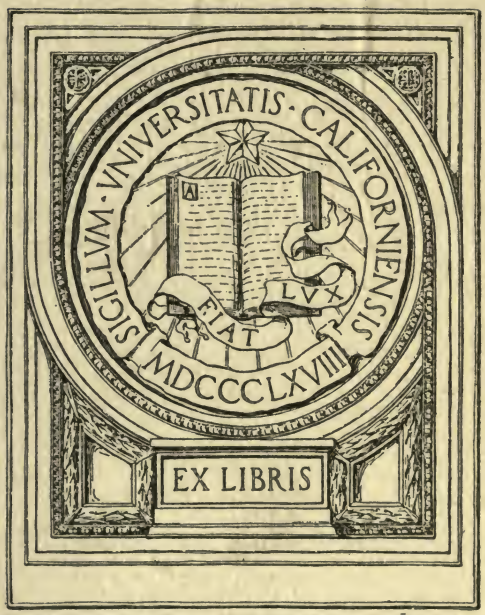
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"IL VECCHIETTO."

By Tabachetti.

Ex Voto:

An Account of The Sacro Monte or New Jerusalem at Varallo Sesia

With some notice of Tabachetti's Remaining Work at the Sanctuary of Crea

By

Samuel Butler

Author of

"Life and Habit," "Luck, or Cunning?" "Erewhon," etc.

"Il n'y a que deux ennemis de la religion—le trop peu, et le trop; et des deux le trop est mille fois le plus dangereux."—*L'Abbé Mabillon*, 1698.

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PREFACE.

THE illustrations to this book are mainly collotype photographs by Messrs. Maclure, Macdonald & Co., of Glasgow. Notwithstanding all their care, it cannot be pretended that the result is equal to what would have been obtained from photogravure; I found, however, that to give anything like an adequate number of photogravures would have made the book so expensive that I was reluctantly compelled to abandon the idea.

As these sheets leave my hands, my attention is called to a pleasant article by Miss Alice Greene about Varallo, that appeared in *The Queen* for Saturday, April 21, 1888. The article is very nicely illustrated, and gives a good idea of the place. Of the Sacro Monte Miss Greene says:—"On the Sacro Monte the tableaux are produced in perpetuity, only the figures are not living, they are terra-cotta

statues painted and moulded in so life-like a way that you feel that, were a man of flesh and blood to get mixed up with the crowd behind the grating, you would have hard work to distinguish him from the figures that have never had life."

I should wish to modify in some respects the conclusion arrived at on pp. 148, 149, about Michael Angelo Rossetti's having been the principal sculptor of the Massacre of the Innocents chapel. There can be no doubt that Rossetti did the figure which he has signed, and several others in the chapel. One of those which are probably by him (the soldier with outstretched arm to the left of the composition) appears in the view of the chapel that I have given to face page 144, but on consideration I incline against the supposition of my text, *i.e.*, that the signature should be taken as governing the whole work, or at any rate the greater part of it, and lean towards accepting the external authority, which, *quantum valeat*, is all in favour of Paracca. I have changed my mind through an increasing inability to resist the opinion of those who hold that the figures fall into two main groups,

one by the man who did the signed figure, *i.e.*, Michael Angelo Rossetti; and another, comprising all the most vigorous, interesting, and best placed figures, that certainly appears to be by a much more powerful hand. Probably, then, Rossetti finished Paracca's work and signed one figure as he did, without any idea of claiming the whole, and believing that Paracca's predominant share was too well known to make mistake about the authorship of the work possible. I have therefore in the title to the illustration given the work to Paracca, but it must be admitted that the question is one of great difficulty, and I can only hope that some other work of Paracca's may be found which will tend to settle it. I will thankfully receive information about any other such work.

May 1, 1888.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Introduction	1
II.	The Rev. S. W. King—Lanzi and Lomazzo	10
III.	Varallo, Past and Present	24
IV.	Bernardino Caimi, and Fassola	38
V.	Early History of the Sacro Monte	49
VI.	Preliminary Considerations	69
VII.	Aim and Scope of the Sacro Monte	80
VIII.	Gaudenzio Ferrari, Tabachetti, and Giovanni D'Enrico	90
IX.	The Ascent of the Sacro Monte, and Chapel No. 1, Adam and Eve; No. 2, Annunciation; No. 3, Salutation of Mary by Elizabeth; No. 4, First Vision of St. Joseph	114
X.	Chapel No. 5, Visit of the Magi; No. 6, Il Presepio; No. 7, Visit of the Shepherds; No. 8, Circumcision; No. 9, Joseph Warned to Fly; No. 10, Flight into Egypt; No. 11, Massacre of the Innocents	132
XI.	Chapel No. 12, Baptism; No. 13, Temptation; No. 14, Woman of Samaria; No. 15, The Paralytic; No. 16, Widow's Son at Nain; No. 17, Transfiguration; No. 18, Raising of Lazarus;	

CHAP. PAGE

No. 19, Entry into Jerusalem; No. 20, Last Supper; No. 21, Agony in the Garden; No. 22, Sleeping Apostles 153

XII. The Palace of Pilate; Chapel No. 23, The Capture of Christ; No. 24, Christ taken before Annas; No. 25, Christ before Caiaphas; No. 26, Repentance of St. Peter; No. 27, Christ before Pilate; No. 28, Christ before Herod; No. 29, Christ taken back to Pilate; No. 30, Flagellation; No. 31, Crowning with Thorns; No. 32, Christ at the Steps of the Prætorium; No. 33, Ecce Homo; No. 34, Pilate Washing his Hands; No. 35, Christ Condemned to Death . . 166

XIII. Mysteries of the Passion and Death; Chapel No. 36, The Journey to Calvary; No. 37, Nailing of Christ to the Cross; No. 38, The Crucifixion 195

XIV. Chapel No. 39, The Descent from the Cross . 214

XV. The Pietà and Remaining Chapels; Chapel No. 40, The Pietà; No. 41, The Entombment; Remaining Chapels and Chiesa Maggiore . . . 225

XVI. Tabachetti's Work at Crea 239

XVII. Conclusion 259

INDEX 271

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

For explanation of the Asterisk see Advertisement of Photographs at the end of the book.

"Il Vecchietto," from the Descent from the Cross (Chapel No. 39) . . . . . *Frontispiece*

PLATE

I. Plan of the Sacro Monte in 1671 *to face page* 68

II. The Old Adam and Eve . . . . „ 121

III. Tabachetti's Adam and Eve . . „ 122

IV. First Vision of St. Joseph . . . „ 130

*V. The Massacre of the Innocents . . „ 144

*VI. The Temptation in the Wilderness . „ 154

VII. Caiaphas . . . . . „ 170

VIII. Herod . . . . . „ 176

IX. Two Laughing Boys . . . . . „ 177

X. Man in Background of the Flagellation Chapel . . . . . „ 182

XI. Stefano Scotto, and Mr. S. Butler . „ 189

*XII. Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary . „ 195
General View to the Right.

XIII. Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary . „ 196
St. John and the Madonna with the other Maries.

*XIV. Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary . „ 198
Sta. Veronica and Man with Goitre.

*XV. Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary . „ 200
The Two Thieves and their Driver.

PLATE

*XVI. GAUDENZIO FERRARI'S CRUCIFIXION . . *to face page* 203
GENERAL VIEW LOOKING TOWARDS THE BAD THIEF.

*XVII. GAUDENZIO FERRARI'S CRUCIFIXION . . „ 204
GENERAL VIEW LOOKING TOWARDS THE GOOD THIEF.

XVIII. GAUDENZIO FERRARI'S PORTRAITS OF STEFANO SCOTTO AND LEONARDO DA VINCI „ 206

XIX. BERNARDINO DE CONTI'S DRAWING OF STEFANO SCOTTO, AND PROFILE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI BY HIMSELF (REVERSED) . „ 207

*XX. GAUDENZIO FERRARI'S CRUCIFIXION . . „ 210
THE BAD THIEF.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

UNABLE to go to Dinant before I published "Ex Voto," I have since been there, and have found out a good deal about Tabachetti's family. His real name was de Wespin, and he came of a family who had been copper-beaters, and hence sculptors—for the Flemish copper-beaters made their own models—for many generations. The family seems to have been the most numerous and important in Dinant.

The sculptor's grandfather, Perpète de Wespin, was the first to take the sobriquet of Tabaguet, and though in the deeds which I have seen at Namur the name is always given as "de Wespin," yet the addition of "dit Tabaguet" shows that this last was the name in current use. His father and mother, and a sister Jacquelinne, under age, appear to have all died in 1587. Jean de Wespin, the sculptor, is mentioned in a deed of that date as "expatrié," and he has a "gardien" or "tuteur," who is to take charge of his inheritance, appointed by the Court, as though he were for some reason unable to appoint one for himself. This lends colour to Fassola's and Torrotti's statement that he lost his reason about 1586 or 1587. I think it more likely, however, considering that he was alive and doing admirable work some fifty years after 1590, that he was the victim of some intrigue than that he was ever really mad. At any rate, about 1587 he appears to have been unable to act for himself.

If his sister Jacquelinne died under age in 1587, Jean is not likely to have been then much more than thirty, so we may conclude that he was born about 1560. There is some six or eight years' work by him remaining at Varallo, and described as finished in the 1586 edition of Caccia. Tabachetti, therefore, must have left home very young, and probably went straight to Varallo. In 1586 or 1587 we lose sight of him till 1590 or 1591, when he went to Crea,

where he did about forty chapels—almost all of which have perished.

On again visiting Milan I found in the Biblioteca Nazionale a guide-book to the Sacro Monte, which was not in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, and of whose existence I had never heard. This guide-book was published in 1606 and reissued in 1610; it mentions all changes since 1590, and even describes chapels not yet in existence, but it says nothing about Tabachetti's First Vision of St. Joseph chapel —the only one of his chapels not given as completed in the 1590 edition of Caccia. I had assumed too hastily that this chapel was done just after the 1590 edition of Caccia had been published, and just before Tabachetti left for Crea in 1590 or 1591, whereas it now appears that it was done about 1610, during a short visit paid by the sculptor to Varallo some twenty years after he had left it.

Finding that Tabachetti returned to Varallo about 1610, I was able to understand two or three figures in the Ecce Homo chapel which I had long thought must be by Tabachetti, but had not ventured to ascribe to him, inasmuch as I believed him to have finally left Varallo some twenty years before the Ecce Homo chapel was made. I have now no doubt that he lent a hand to Giovanni D'Enrico with this chapel, in which he has happily left us his portrait signed with a V (doubtless standing for W, a letter which the Italians have not got), cut on the hat before baking, and invisible from outside the chapel.

Signor Arienta had told me there was a seal on the back of a figure in the Journey to Calvary chapel; on examining this I found it to show a W, with some kind of armorial bearings underneath. I have not been able to find anything like these arms, of which I give a sketch herewith: they have no affinity with those of the de Wespin family, unless the cups with crosses under them are taken as modifications of the three-footed caldrons which were never absent from the arms of Dinant copper-beaters. Tabachetti (for I shall assume that the seal was placed by him) perhaps sealed this figure as an afterthought in 1610, being unable to cut easily into the hard-baked clay, and if he could have Italianised the W he would probably have done so. I should say that I arrived at the Ecce Homo figure as a portrait of Tabachetti before I found the V cut upon the hat; I found the V on examining

the portrait to see if I could find any signature. It stands next to a second portrait of Leonardo da Vinci by Gaudenzio Ferrari, taken into the Ecce Homo chapel, doubtless, on the demolition of some earlier work by Gaudenzio on or near the same site. I knew of this second portrait of Leonardo da Vinci when I published my first edition, but did not venture to say anything about it, as thinking that one life-sized portrait of a Leonardo da Vinci by a Gaudenzio Ferrari was as much of a find at one time as my readers would put up with. I had also known of the V on Tabachetti's hat, but, having no idea that his name was de Wespin, had not seen why this should help it to be a portrait of Tabachetti, and had allowed the fact to escape me.

The figure next to Scotto in the Ecce Homo chapel is, I do not doubt, a portrait of Giovanni D'Enrico. This may explain the tradition at Varallo that Scotto is Antonio D'Enrico, which cannot be. Next to Giovanni D'Enrico stands the second Leonardo da Vinci, and next to Leonardo, as I have said, Tabachetti. In the chapel by Gaudenzio, from which they were taken, the figures of Leonardo and Scotto probably stood side by side as they still do in the Crucifixion chapel. I supposed that Tabachetti and D'Enrico, who must have perfectly well known who they were, separated them in order to get Giovanni D'Enrico nearer the grating. It was the presumption that we had D'Enrico's portrait between Scotto and Leonardo, and the conviction that Tabachetti also had worked in the chapel, that led me to examine the very beautiful figure on the farther side of Leonardo to see if I could find anything to confirm my suspicion that it was a portrait of Tabachetti himself.

I do not think there can be much doubt that the Vecchietto is also a portrait of Tabachetti done some thirty years later than 1610, nor yet do I doubt, now I know that he returned to Varallo in 1610, that the figures of Herod and of Caiaphas are by him. I believe he also at this time paid a short visit to Orta, and did three or four figures in the left hand part of the foreground of the Canonisation of St. Francis chapel. At Montrigone, a mile or so below Borgo-Sesia station, I believe him to have done at least two or three figures, which are very much in his manner, and not at all like either Giacomo Ferro or Giovanni D'Enrico, to whom they are usually assigned. These figures are some twenty or twenty-five years later than 1610, and

tend to show that Tabachetti, as an old man of over seventy, paid a third visit to the Val-Sesia.

The substance of the foregoing paragraphs is published at greater length, and with illustrations, in the number of the *Universal Review* for November 1888, and to which I must refer my readers. I have, however, here given the pith of all that I have yet been able to find out about Tabachetti since "Ex Voto" was published. I should like to add the following in regard to other chapels.

Signor Arienta has found a 1523 scrawled on the frescoes of the Crucifixion chapel. I do not think this shows necessarily that the work was more than begun at that date. He has also found a monogram, which we believe to be Gaudenzio Ferrari's, on the central shield with a lion on it, as given in the illustration facing p. 210. On further consideration, I feel more and more inclined to think that the frescoes in this chapel have been a good deal retouched.

I hardly question that the Second Vision of St. Joseph chapel is by Tabachetti, as also the Woman of Samaria. The Christ in this last chapel is a restoration. In a woodcut of 1640 the position of the figures is reversed, but nothing more than the positions.

Lastly, the Virgin's mother does not have eggs east of Milan. It is a Valsesian custom to give eggs beaten up with wine and sugar to women immediately on their confinement, and I am told that the eggs do no harm though not according to the rules. I am told that Valsesian influence must always be suspected when the Virgin's mother is having eggs.

November 30, 1888.

Note.—A copy of this postscript can be easily inserted into a bound copy, and will be forwarded by Messrs. Trübner & Co. on receipt of stamped and addressed envelope.

EX VOTO.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

In the preface to "Alps and Sanctuaries" I apologised for passing over Varallo-Sesia, the most important of North Italian sanctuaries, on the ground that it required a book to itself. This book I will now endeavour to supply, though well aware that I can only imperfectly and unworthily do so. To treat the subject in the detail it merits would be a task beyond my opportunities; for, in spite of every endeavour, I have not been able to see several works and documents, without which it is useless to try and unravel the earlier history of the sanctuary. The book by Caccia, for example, published by Sessali at Novara in 1565, and reprinted at Brescia in 1576, is sure to turn up some day, but I have failed to find it at Varallo, Novara (where it appears in the catalogue, but not on

the shelves), Milan, the Louvre, the British Museum, and the Bodleian Library. Through the kindness of Sac. Ant. Ceriani, I was able to learn that the Biblioteca Ambrosiana possessed what there can be little doubt is a later edition of this book, dated 1587, but really published at the end of 1586, and another dated 1591, to which Signor Galloni in his "Uomini e fatti celebri di Valle-Sesia" (p. 110) has called attention as the first work ever printed at Varallo. But the last eight of the twenty-one years between 1565 and 1586 were eventful, and much could be at once seen by a comparison of the 1565, 1576, and 1586 [1587] editions, about which speculation is a waste of time while the earlier works are wanting. I have been able to gather two or three interesting facts by a comparison of the 1586 and 1591 editions, and do not doubt that the date, for example, of Tabachetti's advent to Varallo and of his great Calvary Chapel would be settled within a very few years if the missing books were available.

Another document which I have in vain tried to see is the plan of the Sacro Monte as it stood towards the close of the sixteenth century, made by Pellegrino Tibaldi with a view to his own proposed alterations. He who

is fortunate enough to gain access to this plan —which I saw for a few minutes in 1884, but which is now no longer at Varallo—will find a great deal made clear to him which he will otherwise be hardly able to find out. Over and above the foregoing, there is the inventory drawn up by order of Giambattista Albertino in 1614, and a number of other documents, to which reference will be found in the pages of Bordiga, Galloni, Tonetti, and of the many others who have written upon the Val Sesia and its history. A twelve months' stay in the Val Sesia would not suffice to do justice to all the interesting and important questions which arise wholesale as soon as the chapels on the Sacro Monte are examined with any care. I shall confine myself, therefore, to a consideration of the most remarkable features of the Sacro Monte as it exists at present, and to doing what I can to stimulate further study on the part of others.

I cannot understand how a field so interesting, and containing treasures in so many respects unrivalled, can have remained almost wholly untilled by the numerous English lovers of art who yearly flock to Italy; but the fact is one on which I may perhaps be congratulated, inasmuch as more shortcomings and errors of judgment

may be forgiven in my own book, in virtue of its being the first to bring Varallo with any prominence before English readers. That little is known about the Sacro Monte, even by the latest and best reputed authorities on art, may be seen by turning to Sir Henry Layard's recent edition of Kugler's "Handbook of Painting,"—a work which our leading journals of culture have received with acclamation. Sir Henry Layard has evidently either never been at Varallo, or has so completely forgotten what he saw there that his visit no longer counts. He thinks, for example, that the chapels, or, as he also calls them, "stations" (which in itself should show that he has not seen them), are on the way up to the Sacro Monte, whereas all that need be considered are on the top. He thinks that the statues generally in these supposed chapels "on the ascent of the Sacro Monte" are attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari, whereas it is only in two or three out of some five-and-forty that any statues are believed to be by Gaudenzio. He thinks the famous sculptor Tabachetti—for famous he is in North Italy, where he is known —was a painter, and speaks of him as "a local imitator" of Gaudenzio, who "decorated" other chapels, and "whose works only show how rapidly Gaudenzio's influence declined and

his school deteriorated." As a matter of fact, Tabachetti was a Fleming and his name was Tabaquet; but this is a detail. Sir Henry Layard thinks that "Miel" was also "a local imitator" of Gaudenzio. It is not likely that this painter ever worked on the Sacro Monte at all; but if he did, Sir Henry Layard should surely know that he came from Antwerp. Sir Henry Layard does not appear to know that there are any figures in the Crucifixion Chapel of Gaudenzio, or indeed in any of the chapels for which Gaudenzio painted frescoes, and falls into a trap which seems almost laid on purpose for those who would write about Varallo without having been there, in supposing that Gaudenzio painted a Pietà on the Sacro Monte. Having thus displayed the ripeness of his knowledge as regards facts, he says that though the chapels "on the ascent of the Sacro Monte" are "objects of wonder and admiration to the innumerable pilgrims who frequent this sacred spot," yet "the bad taste of the colour and clothing make them highly repugnant to a cultivated eye."

I begin to understand now how we came to buy the Blenheim Raffaelle.

Finally, Sir Henry Layard says it is "very doubtful" whether any of the statues were modelled or executed by Gaudenzio Ferrari at

all. It is a pity he has not thought it necessary to give a single reason or authority in support of a statement so surprising.

Some of these blunders appear in the edition of 1874 edited by Lady Eastlake. In that edition the writer evidently knows nothing of any figures in the Crucifixion Chapel, and Sir Henry Layard was unable to supply the omission. The writer in the 1874 edition says that "Gaudenzio is seen as a modeller of painted terra-cotta in the stations ascending to the chapel (*sic*) on the Sacro Monte." It is from this source that Sir Henry Layard got his idea that the chapels are on the way up to the Sacro Monte, and that they are distinct from those for which Gaudenzio painted frescoes on the top of the mountain. Having perhaps seen photographs of the Sacro Monte at Varese, where the chapels climb the hill along with the road, or having perhaps actually seen the Madonna del Sasso at Locarno, where small oratories with frescoes of the Stations of the Cross are placed on the ascent, he thought those at Varallo might as well remain on the ascent also, and that it would be safe to call them "stations." It is the writer in the 1874 edition who first gave him or her self airs about a cultivated eye; but he or she had the grace to put

in a saving clause to the effect that the designs in some instances were "full of grace." True, Sir Henry Layard has never seen the designs; nevertheless his eye is too highly cultivated to put up with this clause; so it has disappeared, to make room, I suppose, for the sentence in which so much accurate knowledge is displayed in respect to Tabachetti and Miel d'Anvers. Sir Henry Layard should keep to the good old plan of saying that the picture would have been better if the artist had taken more pains, and praising the works of Pietro Perugino. Personally, I confess I am sorry he has never seen the Sacro Monte. If he has trod on so many ploughshares without having seen Varallo, what might he not have achieved in the plenitude of a taste which has been cultivated in every respect save that of not pretending to know more than one does know, if he had actually been there, and seen some one or two of the statues themselves?

I have only sampled Sir Henry Layard's work in respect of two other painters, but have found no less reason to differ from him there than here. I refer to his remarks about Giovanni and Gentile Bellini. I must reserve the counter-statement of my own opinion for another work, in which I shall hope to deal with the

real and supposed portraits of those two great men. I will, however, take the present opportunity of protesting against a sentence which caught my eye in passing, and which I believe to be as fundamentally unsound as any I ever saw written, even by a professional art critic or by a director of a national collection. Sir Henry Layard, in his chapter on Leonardo da Vinci, says—

> "One thing prominently taught us by the works of Leonardo and Raffaelle, of Michael Angelo and Titian, is distinctly this—that purity of morals, freedom of institutions, and sincerity of faith have nothing to do with excellence in art."

I should prefer to say, that if the works of the four artists above mentioned show one thing more clearly than another, it is that neither power over line, nor knowledge of form, nor fine sense of colour, nor facility of invention, nor any of the marvellous gifts which three out of the four undoubtedly possessed, will make any man's work live permanently in our affections unless it is rooted in sincerity of faith and in love towards God and man. More briefly, it is ἀγάπη, or the spirit, and not γνώσις, or the letter, which is the soul of all true art. This, it should go without saying, applies to music, literature, and to whatever can be done at all.

If it has been done "to the Lord"—that is to say, with sincerity and freedom from affectation—whether with conscious effusion, as by Gaudenzio, or with perhaps robuster unconsciousness, as by Tabachetti, a halo will gather round it that will illumine it though it pass through the valley of the shadow of death itself. If it has been done in self-seeking, as, *exceptis excipiendis*, by Leonardo, Titian, Michael Angelo, and Raffaelle, it will in due course lose hold and power in proportion to the insincerity with which it was tainted.

CHAPTER II.

THE REV. S. W. KING—LANZI AND LOMAZZO.

LEAVING Sir Henry Layard, let us turn to one of the few English writers who have given some attention to Varallo—I mean to the Rev. S. W. King's delightful work "The Italian Valleys of the Pennine Alps." This author says—

"When we first visited Varallo, it was comparatively little known to travellers, but we now found that of late years many more had frequented it, and its beautiful scenery and great attractions were becoming more generally and deservedly appreciated. Independently of its own picturesque situation, and its advantages as head-quarters for exploring the neighbouring Vals and their romantic scenery, the works which it possesses of the ancient and famous Val Sesian school of painters and modellers are most interesting. At the head of them stands first and foremost Gaudenzio Ferrari, whose original and masterly productions ought to be far more widely known and studied than they as yet are; and some of the finest of them are to be found in the churches and Sacro Monte of Varallo" (p. 498).

Of the Sacro Monte the same writer says—

"No situation could have been more happily chosen for the purpose intended than the little mountain rising on the

north of Varallo to a height of about 270 feet"—[this is an error; the floor of the church on the Sacro Monte is just 500 feet above the bridge over the Mastallone]—"on which the chapels, oratories, and convents of that extraordinary creation the New Jerusalem are grouped together. Besides the beauty of the site and its convenient proximity to a town like Varallo of some 3000 inhabitants, the character of the mountain is exactly adapted for the effective disposition of the various 'stations' of which it consists"—[it does not consist of "stations"]—"and on this account chiefly it was selected by the founder, the 'Blessed Bernardino Caimo.' A Milanese of noble family, and Vicar of the Convent of the Minorites in Milan, and also in connection with that of Varallo, he was specially commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV. to visit the Sepulchre and other holy places in Palestine, and while there took the opportunity of making copies and drawings, with the intention of erecting a facsimile of them in his native country. On his return to Italy in 1491, after examining all the likely sites within reasonable distance of Milan, he found the conical hills of the Val Sesia the best adapted for his design, and fixed upon Varallo as the spot; being probably specially attracted to it from the fact of the convent and church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, already described, having been conveyed through him to the 'Minori Osservanti,' as appears from a brief of Innocent VIII., dated December 21, 1486."

Mr. King does not give the source from which he derived his knowledge of the existence of this act, and I have not come across a notice of it elsewhere, except a brief one in Signor Galloni's work (p. 71), and a reference to it in the conveyance of April 14, 1493. But Signor Arienta of Varallo, whose industry in collecting

materials for a history of the Sacro Monte cannot be surpassed, showed me a transcript from an old plan of the church of S. Maria delle Grazie, in which the inscription on Bernardino Caimi's grave was given—an inscription which (so at least I understood Signor Arienta to say) is now covered by an altar which had been erected on the site of the grave. The inscription ran :—

"Hic quiescunt ossa B. Bernardini Caimis Mediolan. S. Montis Varalli Fundatoris An. 1486. Pontif. Dipl sub die 21 Xbris. Mortuus est autem in hoc cœnobio An. Vulg. Æræ 1499."

It would thus appear that the Sacro Monte was founded four years earlier than the received date. The formal deed of conveyance of the site on the mountain from the town to Bernardino Caimi was not signed till the 14th of April 1493; but the work had been already commenced, as is shown by the inscription still remaining over the reproduction of the Holy Sepulchre, which is dated the 17th of October 1491. Probably the work was contemplated in 1486, and interrupted by B. Caimi's return to Jerusalem in 1487, not to be actively resumed till 1490.

"The first stone," says Mr. King, "was laid by Scarognini, a Milanese 'magnifico,' who cordially entered into the

scheme; and at his expense the Holy Sepulchre was completed, and a hospice attached, where the founder and a number of Franciscan brothers came to reside in 1493. Caimo had planned a vast extension of this commencement, but died within three years, leaving his designs to be carried out by his successors."

. . . . . .

"Each oratory contains a group—in some very numerous—of figures modelled in terra-cotta the size of life or larger; many of them of great merit as works of art, others very inferior and mere rubbish. The figures are coloured and occasionally draped with appropriate clothing, the resemblance to life being heightened by the addition of human hair"—[which, by the way, is always horse-hair]—"and the effect is often very startling. Each chapel represents a different 'mystery,' and, beside the modelled figures, the walls are decorated with frescoes. The front of each is open to the air, all but a wire grating, through apertures in which the subject may be perfectly seen in the position intended by the designer" (pp. 510–512).

Mr. King says, correctly, that Gaudenzio's earliest remaining work on the Sacro Monte is the Chapel of the Pietà, that originally contained the figures of Christ bearing the cross, but from which the modelled figures were removed, others being substituted that had no connection with the background. I do not know, however, that Christ was actually carrying the cross in the chapel as it originally stood. The words of the 1587 edition of Caccia (?) stand, "Come il N.S. fu spogliato de suoi panni, e condotto sopra il Monte Cal-

vario, ch' e fatto di bellissimo e ben inteso relievo."

"The frescoes on the wall," he continues, "are particularly interesting, as having been painted by him at the early age of nineteen"—[Mr. King supposes Gaudenzio Ferrari to have been born in 1484]—"when his ambition to share in the glory and renown of the great work was gratified by this chapel being intrusted to him; a proof of his early talent and the just appreciation of it. The frescoes are much injured, but of the chief one there is enough to show its excellence. On one side is St. John, with clasped hands gazing upwards in grief, and the two Marys sorrowing, as a soldier in the centre seems to forbid their following further; his helmet is embossed and gilt as in the instances in the Franciscan church, while the two thieves are led bound by a figure on horseback."

These frescoes appear to me to have been not so much restored as repainted—that is to say, where they are not almost entirely gone. The green colour that now prevails in the shadows and half-tones is alien to Gaudenzio, and cannot be accepted as his. I should say, however, that my friend Signor Arienta of Varallo differs from me on this point. At any rate, the work is now little more than a ruin, and the terra-cotta Pietà is among the least satisfactory groups on the Sacro Monte. Mr. King continues:—

"In the Chapel of the Adoration of the Magi we have a work of higher merit, giving evidence of his studies under Raphael."

Here Mr. King is in some measure mistaken. The frescoes in the Magi Chapel are indeed greatly finer than those in the present Pietà, but they were painted from thirty to forty years later, when Gaudenzio was in his prime, and it is to years of intervening incessant effort and practice, not to any study under Raphael, that the enlargement of style and greater freedom of design is due. Gaudenzio never studied under Raphael; he may have painted for him, and perhaps did so—no one knows whether he did or did not—but in every branch of his art he was incomparably Raphael's superior, and must have known it perfectly well.

Returning to Mr. King, with whom, in the main, I am in cordial sympathy, we read :—

"The group of ten figures in terra-cotta represents the three kings just arrived with their immediate attendants, and alighting at the door of an inner recess, where a light burns over the manger of Bethlehem, and in which is a simple but exquisite group of St. Joseph, the Virgin, and Child. On the walls of the chapel are painted in fresco a crowd of followers, the varieties of whose costumes, attitudes, and figures are most cleverly portrayed. In modelling the horses which form part of the central group, Ferrari was assisted by his pupil Fermo Stella."—[Fermo Stella is not known to have been a pupil of Gaudenzio's, and was probably established as a painter before Gaudenzio began to work at all.]—"But the greatest of all Gaudenzio's achievements is the large chapel of the Crucifixion, a work of the most extraordinary character and masterly execution. His first

design for the subject, on the screen of the Minorite Church, he has here carried out in life-like figures in terra-cotta; twenty-six of which form the centre group, embodying the events of the Passion; while round the walls are depicted with wonderful power a crowd of spectators, numbering some 150, most of whom are gazing at the central figure of the Saviour on the cross. The variety of expression, costume, and character is almost infinite. Round the roof are twenty angels in the most varied and graceful attitudes, deserving of special attention; and also a hideous figure of Lucifer."

Gaudenzio's devils are never quite satisfactory. His angels are divine, and no one can make them cry as he does. When my friend Mr. H. Festing Jones met a lovely child crying in the streets of Varallo last summer, he said it was crying like one of Gaudenzio's angels; and so it was. Gaudenzio was at home with everything human, and even superhuman, if beautiful; if it was only a case of dealing with ugly, wicked, and disagreeable people, he knew all about this, and could paint them if the occasion required it; but when it came to a downright unmitigated devil, he was powerless. He could never have done Tabachetti's serpent in the Adam and Eve Chapel, nor yet the plausible fair-spoken devil, as in the Temptation Chapel, also by Tabachetti.

To conclude my extracts from Mr. King. Speaking of the Crucifixion Chapel, he says:—

"Though this combination of terra-cotta and fresco may

not be as highly esteemed in the present day as in the times when this extraordinary sanctuary sprang into existence, yet this composition must always be admired as one of the greatest of Ferrari's works, and undoubtedly that on which he lavished the full force of his genius and the collected studies and experience of his previous artist life."

It is noteworthy, but not perhaps surprising, that this observant, intelligent, and sympathetic writer, probably through inability to at once understand and enter into the conventions rendered necessary by the conditions under which works so unfamiliar to him must be both executed and looked at, has failed to notice the existence of Tabachetti, never mentioning his name nor referring to one of his works—not even to the Madonna and Child in the church of S. Gaudenzio, which one would have thought could hardly fail to strike him.

Mr. King has elsewhere in his work referred both to Lanzi and to Lomazzo in support of his very high opinion of Gaudenzio Ferrari; it may, therefore, be as well to give extracts from each of these writers. Lanzi says:—

"If we examine into further particulars of his style, we shall find Ferrari's warm and lively colouring so superior to that of the Milanese artists of his day, that we shall have no difficulty in recognising it in the churches where he painted; the eye of the spectator is directly attracted

towards it; his carnations are natural and varied according to his subjects; his draperies display much fancy and originality, with middle tints blended so skilfully as to equal the most beautiful produced by any other artist. And, if we may say so,—he succeeded in representing the minds even better than the forms of his subjects. He particularly studied this branch of the art, and we seldom observe more marked attitudes or more expressive. . . . As Lomazzo, however, has dwelt so much at length on his admirable skill both in painting and modelling, it would be idle to insist on it further. But I ought to add that it is a great reflection upon Vasari that he did not better know or better estimate such an artist; so that foreigners who form their opinions only from history are left unacquainted with his merit, and have uniformly neglected to do him justice in their writings."

Lomazzo says:—

"Now amongst the worthy painters who excelled herein, Raph. Urbine was not the least who performed his workes with a divine kind of maiesty; neither was Polidore"—[Polidoro Caldara da Caravaggio]—"much behind him in his kinde, whose pictures seemed as it were passing furious; nor yet Andreas Mantegna, whose vaine showed a very laborious curiositie; nor yet Leonard Vincent"—[Leonardo da Vinci]—"in whose doings there was never any error found in this point. Wherof amongst all other of his works, that admirable last supper of Christ in Refect. S. Maria de Gratia in Milane maketh most evident proofe, in which he hath so lively expressed the passions of the Apostles mindes in their countenances and the rest of their bodies, that a man may boldly say the truth was nothing superior to his representation, and neede not be afraide to reckon it among the best works of oyle-painting (of which kind of painting John de Bruges was the first inventor). For in those Apostles you might distinctly perceive admira-

tion, feare, griefe, suspition, love, &c.; all which were sometimes to be seen together in one of them, and finally in Judas a treason-plotting countenance, as it were the very true counterfiet of a traitor. So that therein he has left a sufficient argument of his rare perfection, in the true understanding of the passions of the mind exemplified outwardly in the bodie. Which because it is the most necessary part of painting, I purpose (as I say) to handle in this present booke. I may not omit Mi. Angelo in any case, whose skill and painfulnesse in this point was so greate, that his pictures carry with them more hard motions expressed after an unusual manner, but all of them tending to a certaine bould stoutnesse. And as for Titian, he hath worthely purchased the name of a great painter in this matter, as his pictures do sufficiently witness; in each whereof there shineth a certain mooving vertue, seeming to incite the beholder unto the imitation thereof. Of whom this saying may well be verified, that he was beloved of the world and envied of nature.

"Finally, mine old Master Gaudentius (though he be not much knowne) was inferior unto fewe, in giving the apt motions to the Saintes and Angels; who was not onely a very witty painter (as I have elsewhere showed), but also a most profound philosopher and mathematician. Amongst all whose all-praiseworthy workes (which are almost infinite, especially in this point of motion) there are divers mysteries of Christe's passion, of his doing, but chiefly a crucifix called Mount Calvary at the Sepulchre of Varallo; where he hath made admirable horses and strange angels, not only in painting, but also in plasticke, of a kinde of earth wrought most curiously with his own hand cleane rounde"—[*di tutto rilievo*]—"through all the figures.

"Besides in the vault of the Chappell of S. Mary de Gratia in Milane he hath wrought most naturall angels, I meane especially for their actions; there is also that mighty cube of St. Mary de Serono, the Cupola of S. Maria at Saronno, full of thrones of angells set out with actions and

habites of all sortes, carrying diversity of most strange instruments in their hands. I may not conceal that goodly chapel which he made in his latter time, in the Church of Peace in Milan, where you shall find small histories of our Lady and Joachime showing such superexcellent motions that they seem much to revive and animate the spectators.

"Moreover, the story of S. Roccho done by him in Vercelli, with divers workes in that city; although indeede almost all Lombardy be adorned with his most rare workes, I will not conceal one saying, which was that all painters delight to steale other men's inventions, but that he himself was in no great danger of being detected of theft hereafter. Now this great painter, although in reason he might for his discretion, wisedome, and worth be compared with the above named in the first booke, cap. 29, yet notwithstanding is he omitted by George Vasary in his lives of the famous painters, carvers, and architects. An argument, to say no worse of him, that he intended to eternise only his own Tuscanes. But I proceede to the unfoulding of the originall causes of these motions. And first for our better understanding I will beginne with those passions of the mind whereby the body is mooved to the performance of his particular effects" (Id., Book ii. pp. 7, 8).

What Gaudenzio said was that all painters were fond of stealing, but that they were pretty sure to be found out sooner or later.

For my own part, I should like to say that I prefer Giovanni Bellini to Gaudenzio; but unless Giotto and Giorgione, I really do not know who else of the Italian painters should stand before him. Bernardino Luini runs him close, but great as Bernardino Luini was, Gaudenzio, in spite of not a little mannerism, was greater.

The passage above referred to by Lomazzo as from his twenty-ninth chapter runs :—

"Now if any man be desirous to learne the most exact and smallest parts of these proportions, together with the way how to transfer them from one body to another, I refer him to the works of Le. Vincent, Bramante, Vincentius Foppa, Barnard Zenale; and for prints to Albert Durer, Hispill Peum, &c. And out of mine owne workes he may gather that I have endeavoured if not performed these proportions, done according to these rules; which all the best and famous painters of our time have likewise observed; who have also attained to the exquisite proportions of the seven planets. Amongst whom Mi. Angelo hath merited the chiefest commendation; next him Raph. Urbine was famous for making of delicate and Venereall bodies; Leon. Vincent for expressing of solary bodies; Polidore Caldara of Caravaggio for Martiall bodies; Titianus Vecellino for Lunaryes; and Gaudentius Ferrato da Valdugia a Milaner for Jovialistes" (55 Bk. i. p. 117).

Having been compelled to look through the greater part of Lomazzo's work, inasmuch as not one of the several writers who have referred to his high opinion of Gaudenzio has given chapter and page, I would fain allow myself to linger somewhat in the fascinating paths into which my subject has led me. I should like to call further attention to this forgotten work as "Englished" by one Richard Haydocke, "Student in Physik," and dedicated to no less a person than "to the Right Worshipful Thomas Bodley, Esq.," whose foundation of the library

that bears his name is referred to in the preface. Gladly would I tell him about Alexander the Great, who, being overmatched by his enemies in India, "was seen to reake forth from his bodie fier and light;" and of the father of Theodoricus, who, "by the like vehement effect, breathed out of his heart, as from a burning furnace, fierce sparkels; which flying forth, shone, and made a sound in the aire." I should like to explain to him about the motions of the seven planets which are the seven governours of the world, and how Saturn "causeth a complexion of colour between blacke and yeallowe, meager, distorted, of an harde skinne, eminent vaines, an hairie bodie, small eies, eie brows joyned together &c.," and how "he maketh a man subtle, wittie, a way-layer, and murtherer;" how, again, Jupiter is "magnipotent, good natured, fortunate, sweete, pleasant, the best wel-willer, honest, neate, of a good gate, honorable, the author of mirth and judgement, wise, true, the revealer of truth, the chiefe judge, exceeding all the planets in goodnesse, the bestower of riches and wisedome;" how Mars "broaches bould spirites, bloud, brawles and all disordered, inconsiderate, and headdy actions;" how "his gestures are terrible, cruell, fierce, angry, proude, hasty and violent," and how also "he is reputed

hoat and drie in the highest degree, bearing sway over redde choler." I should like to tell him about the passions, actions, and the gestures they occasion, described as they are with a sweet and silly unreasonableness that is very charming to read, and makes no demand whatever upon the understanding. But charming as are the pages of Lomazzo, those of Torrotti are more charming still, and they have a connection with our subject which Lomazzo's have not. Enough, therefore, that Mr. Haydocke did not get through more than half Lomazzo's treatise, and that, glancing over the untranslated pages, I see frequent allusions to Gaudenzio in the warmest terms, but no passage so important as the longer of the two quoted above.

CHAPTER III.

VARALLO, PAST AND PRESENT.

Now that Varallo can be easily reached by the new railway from Novara, it is not likely to remain so little known much longer. The town is agreeable to stay in; it contains three excellent inns. I name them in geographical order. They are the Italia, the Croce Bianca, and the Posta, while there is another not less excellent on the Sacro Monte itself. I have stayed at all these inns, and have received so much kindness in each of them, that I must decline the invidious task of recommending any one of them especially. My book is intended for Varallo, and not for this or that hotel. The neighbourhood affords numberless excursions, all of them full of interest and beauty; the town itself, though no exception to the rule that the eastern cities of North Italy are more beautiful than the western, is still full of admirable subjects for those who are fond of sketching. The

people are hospitable to a fault; personally, I owe them the greatest honour that has ever been conferred upon me—an honour far greater than any I have ever received among those who know me better, and are probably better judges of my deserts. The climate is healthy, the nights being cool even in the height of summer, and the days almost invariably sunny and free from fog in winter. With all these advantages, therefore, it is not easy to understand the neglect that has befallen it, except on the ground that until lately it has been singularly difficult of access.

Two hundred years ago it must have been much as it is at present. Turning to the work of the excellent Canon Torrotti, published in 1686, I find he writes as follows :—

"Oh, what fannings is there not here," he exclaims, "of the assiduous Zephyrs; what warmth in winter, what gelidness of the air in summer; and what freaks are there not of Nature by way of caves, grottoes, and delicious chambers hewn by her own hand. Here can be enjoyed wines of the very finest flavour, trout as dainty as can be caught in any waters, game of the most singular excellence; in short, there is here a great commodity of everything most sensual and pleasing to the palate. And of those who come here, above all I must praise the Piedmontese, who arrive in frequent cavalcades of from twenty to five-and-twenty people, to an edification which is beyond all praise; and they are munificent in the gifts they leave behind them to the Holy Place—not resembling those who are mean

towards God though they will spend freely enough upon their hotel-bill. Carriages of all sorts can be had here easily; it is the Milanese who for the most part make use of these carriages and equipages, for they are pompous and splendid in their carryings on. From elsewhither processions arrive daily, even from Switzerland, and there are sometimes as many as ten thousand visitors extraordinary come here in a single day, yet is there no hindrance but they find comfortable lodging, and at very reasonable prices.

"As for the distance, it is about sixty miles, or two easy days' journey from Milan; it is much the same from Turin; it is one day from Novara, and one from Vercelli; but the most delightful thing about this journey is that you can combine so many other devotions along with it. In the Milanese district, for example, there is the mountain of Varese, and that of S. Carlo of Arona on the Lago Maggiore; and there are S. Francesco and S. Giulio on the Lago d' Orta; then there is the Madonna of Oropa in the mountains of Biella, which sanctuary is in the diocese of Vercelli, as is also S. Giovanni di Campiglio, the Madonna di Crevacore, and Gattinara; there is also the Mount Calvary of Domo d' Ossola, on the road towards Switzerland, and Montrigone below Borgosesia. These, indeed, are but chapels in imitation of our own Holy Sepulchre, and cannot compare with it neither in opulence nor in importance; still those of Varese and Oropa are of some note and wealth. Moreover, the neighbourhood of this our own Jerusalem is the exact counterpart of that which is in the Holy Land, having the Mastallone on the one side for the brook Kedron, and the Sesia for the Jordan, and the lake of Orta for that of Cæsaræa; while for the Levites there are the fathers of St. Bernard of Mentone in the Graian and Pennine Alps of Aosta, where there are so many Roman antiquities that they may be contemplated not only as monuments of empire, but as also of the vanity of all human greatness" (pp. 19–21).

A little later the Canon tells us of the antiquity of the councils that have been held in the neighbourhood, and of one especially :—

"Which was held secretly by five bishops on the summit of one of the mountains of Sorba in the Val Rassa, which is still hence called the bishops' seat ; for they came thither as to the place where the five dioceses adjoined, and each one sat on a stone within the boundary of his own diocese ; and they are those of Novara, Vercelli, Ivrea, Orta, and Sion. Nor must we forget the signal service rendered to the universal church in these same mountains of Rassa by the discomfiture of the heretic monks Gazzari to which end Pope Clement V. in 1307 issued several bulls, and among them one bearing date on the third day of the ides of August, given at Pottieri, in which he confirmed the liberty of our people, and acknowledged the Capi as Counts of the Church. . . . . For the Valsesian people have been ever free, and by God's grace have shaken off the yoke of usurpers while continuing faithful and profitable subjects of those who have equitably protected them."

Torrotti goes on to tell us about the Blessed shepherdess Panesia, a virgin of the most exquisite beauty, and only fifteen years old, who was martyred on the 1st of May 1383 on the mountain of S. Giovanni of Quarona, with three wounds on her head and two on her throat, inflicted by a wicked stepmother who had a devil, and whose behests she had obeyed with such consummate sweetness that she had attained perfection ; on which, so invariably do extremes meet, she had to be put to death and

made a martyr; and if we want to know more about her, we can find it in the work that has been so elegantly written about her by the most illustrious Father Castiglione Sommasco. Again, there was the famous miracle in 1333 of S. Maiolo in Val Rassa, which is celebrated every year, and in virtue of which Pietro, only child of Viscount Emiliano, one of the three brothers who fought against the heretics, was saved after having been carried off by a ravenous wolf into the woods of Val Sorba as far as the fountain named after the rout which this same Count, when he afterwards grew up, inflicted upon the enemies of the valley in 1377; wherefore he is seen in an old picture of those times as a child in swaddling-clothes in the mouth of a wolf, and he gave the name of Fassola di S. Maiolo to his descendants. Nor, as in private duty bound, can the worthy Canon forget—

"My own beloved chapel of St. Mary of the Snow, for whose honour and glory I have done my utmost, at the entrance of the Val Mastallone; for here on a fragment of ruined wall there grow at all times sundry flowers, even in the ice and snows of winter; wherefore I had the distich set up where it may be now seen."

I have never seen it, but must search for it next time I go to Varallo. Torrotti presently says that the country being sterile, the people

are hard pressed for food during two-thirds of the year; hence they have betaken themselves to commerce and to sundry arts, with which they overrun the world, returning home but once or twice a year, with their hands well filled with that which they have garnered, to sustain and comfort themselves with their families; and their toil and the gains that they have made redound no little to the advantage of the states of Milan and Piedmont. He again declares that they maintain their liberty, neither will they brook the least infringement thereon. And their neighbours, he continues, as well as the dwellers in the valley itself, are interested in this; for here, as in some desert or peaceful wilderness, the noble families of Italy and neighbouring provinces have been ever prone to harbour in times of war and trouble.

Then, later, there comes an account of a battle, which I cannot very well understand, but it seems to have been fought on the 26th of July 1655. The Savoyards were on their way to assist at a siege of Pavia, and were determined to punish the Valsesians *en route;* they had come up from Romagnano to Borgosesia, when the Valsesians attacked them as they were at dinner, and shot off the finger

of a general officer who was eating an egg; on this the battle became general, and the Savoyards were caught every way; for the waters of the Sesia had come down in flood during the night. The Germans of Alagna, Rima, and Rimella were in it, somehow, and those of Pregemella in the Val Dobbia. I cannot make out whether the Pregemella people were Germans or merely people; either way, the German-speaking villages in the Val Sesia appear to have been the same two hundred years ago as now. I mean, it does not seem that the German-speaking race extended lower down the valley then than now. But at any rate, the queen, or whoever "Madama Reale" may be, was very angry about the battle.

"It is the custom," concludes our author, "in token of holy cheerfulness (*allegria spirituale*) to wear a sprig of pine in the hat on leaving the holy place, to show that the visitor has been there; for it has some fine pine trees. This custom was introduced in royal merriment by Carlo Emmanuele I. He put a sprig in his hat, and was imitated by all his court, and the ladies wore the same in their bosom or in their hair. Assuredly it is one of the wonders of the world to see here, amid the amenities and allurements of the country, especially during the summer season, what a continuous *festa* or holy fair is maintained. For there come and go torrents of men and women of every nation under heaven. Here you shall see pilgrims and persons in religion of every description, processions, prelates, and often princes and princesses, carriages, litters, calêches, equipages, caval-

cades accompanied by trumpeters, gay troops of cavaliers, and ladies with plumes in their hats and rich apparel wherewithal to make themselves attractive; and at intervals you shall hear all manner of songs, concerts, and musical instruments, both civil and military, all done with a modest and devout cheerfulness of demeanour, by which I am reminded of nothing so strongly as of the words of the Psalmist in the which he saith 'Come and see the works of the Lord, for He hath done wonders upon earth.' "

It must have been something like our own Tunbridge Wells or Bath in the last century. Indeed, one is tempted to think that if the sea had come up to Varallo, it must have been almost more like Margate than Jerusalem. Nor can we forget the gentle rebuke administered on an earlier page to those who came neither on business nor for devotion's sake, but out of mere idle curiosity, and bringing with them company which the good Canon designates as scandalous. *Mais nous avons changé tout cela.*

I have allowed myself to quote so freely from Torrotti, as thinking that the reader will glean more incidentally from these fragments about the genius of Varallo and its antecedents than he would get from pages of disquisition on my own part. Returning to the Varallo of modern times, I would say that even now that the railway has been opened, the pleasantest way of

getting there is still over the Colma from Pella opposite Orta. I always call this road "the root," for I once saw it thus described, obviously in good faith, in the visitors' book at one of the inns in Varallo. The gentleman said he had found "the root" without any difficulty at Pella, had taken it all the way to Varallo, and it was delicious. He said it was one of the finest "roots" he had ever seen, and it was only nine or ten miles long.

There were one or two other things in that book, of which, while I am about it, I should like to deliver my mind. A certain man who wrote a bold round hand signed his name "Tom Taylor"—doubtless not the late well-known art critic and dramatic writer, but some other person of the same name—in the visitors' book of the Hotel Leone d' Oro at Orta, and added the word "disgusted." I saw this entry, then comparatively recent, in 1871, and on going on to the Hotel d' Italia at Varallo, found it repeated—"Tom Taylor disgusted." The entries in each case were probably aimed at the Sacro Monte, and not at the inn; but they grated on me, as they must have done on many other English visitors; and I saw with pleasure that some one had written against the second of them the following epigram,

which is too neat not to be preserved. It ran :—

> "Oh wretched Tom Taylor, disgusted at Orta,
> At Varallo we find him disgusted again;
> The feeling's contagious, I really have caught a
> Disgust for Tom Taylor—he travels in vain."

Who, I wonder, was it who could fling off such an apt impromptu, and how many more mute inglorious writers have we not who might do anything they chose if they would only choose to do anything at all? Some one else had written on an earlier page;—

1.

> "While you've that which makes the mare go
> You should stay at this albergo,
>
> Bona in esse and in posse
> Are dispensed by Joseph Rossi.

2.

> "Ask him and he'll set before ye
> Vino birra e liquori,
>
> Asti, Grignolino, Sherry
> Prezzi moderati—very."

There was more, but I have forgotten it. Joseph Rossi was a famous old waiter long since retired, something like Pietro at the Hotel Rosa Rossa at Casale, whom all that country side knew perfectly well. This last entry reminds me of a somewhat similar one

which I saw some five and thirty years ago at the inn at Harlech ;—

1.

Τῇδε πᾶν ἄριστον ἔστι,
Δεῖπνον οἶνον καὶ γάλ' ἥδυ.
By this 'ere I mean to testi-
fy how very well they feed you.

2.

"Quam superba sit ruina,
Ipsa sua semper laus,
And the castle—nothing finer,
With its ivy and jackdaws."

It is a pity the art of writing such pleasing little poems should be now so generally neglected in favour of more ambitious compositions. Whatever brevity may be as regards wit it is certainly the soul of all agreeable poetry.

But again to return to Varallo, or rather to the way of reaching it by the Colma. There is nothing in North Italy more beautiful than this walk, with its park-like chestnut-covered slopes of undulating pasture land dotted about with the finest thatched barns to be found outside Titian. We might almost fancy that Handel had it in his mind when he wrote his divine air "Verdi Prati." Certainly no country can be better fitted either to the words or

music. It continues in full beauty all the way to Civiasco, where the carriage road begins that now goes down into the main road between Varallo and Novara, joining it a mile and a half or so below Varallo.

Close to the point of juncture there is a chapel of singularly graceful elegant design, called the Madonna di Loreto. To this chapel I will again return: it is covered with frescoes. Near it there is an open triangular piece of grass land on which a murderer was beheaded within the memory of persons still living. A wild old man, who looked like an executioner broken loose from the flagellation chapel on the Sacro Monte, but who was quite tame and kind to us when we came to know him, told Jones and myself this last summer that he remembered seeing the murderer brought here and beheaded, this being as close as might be to the place where the murder had been committed. We were at first rather sceptical, but on inquiry at Varallo found that there had been an execution here, the last in the open country, somewhere about the year 1835.

From this spot two roads lead to Varallo; one somewhat circuitous by Mantegna, a village notable for a remarkable fresco out-

side the church, in which the Virgin is appearing to a lady and gentleman as they are lying both of them fast asleep in a large bed, with their two dear little round heads on a couple of comfortable pillows. The three Magi in the very interesting frescoes behind the choir in the church of S. Abbondio at Como are, if I remember, all in one bed when the angel comes to tell them about the star, and I fancy they have a striped counterpane, but it is some time since I saw the frescoes; at any rate the angel was not a lady. We had often before seen the Virgin appear to a lady in bed, and even to a gentleman in bed, but never before to a lady and a gentleman both in the same bed. She is not, however, so much appearing to them as sitting upon them, and I should say she was pretty heavy. The fresco is dated 1641.

The other road is the direct one, and passes the old church of St. Mark, outside which there are some charming fifteenth-century frescoes by nobody in particular, and among them a cow who, at the instance of St. Mark, is pinning a bear or wolf to a tree in a most resolute determined manner.

There are other frescoes on this church by the Varallese painter Luini (not to be con-

founded with Bernardino), but I do not remember them as remarkable.

Up to this point the two highest peaks of Monte Rosa are still visible when clouds permit; here they disappear behind nearer mountains, and in a few more hundred yards Varallo is entered.

CHAPTER IV.

BERNARDINO CAIMI, AND FASSOLA.

In geographical position Varallo is the most western city of North Italy in which painting and sculpture were endemic. Turin, Novara, Vercelli, Casale, Ivrea, Biella, Alessandria, and Aosta have no endemic art comparable to that of the cities east of Milan. Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, Padua, not to mention Venice and the cities of the Friuli, not only produced artists who have made themselves permanently famous, but are themselves, in their architecture and external features generally, works of art as impressive as any they contain ; they are stamped with the widely-spread instinctive feeling for beauty with which the age and people that reared them must assuredly have been inspired. The eastern cities have perhaps suffered more from war, nevertheless it is hard to think that the beauty so characteristic of the eastern Lombardic cities should fail so con-

spicuously, at least by comparison, in the western, if the genius of the places had been the same. All cities are symptomatic of the men who built them, towns no less than bodily organisation being that unknown something which we call mind or spirit made manifest in material form. Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians—to name them in alphabetical order, are not more distinct in their several faults and virtues than are London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome, in the impression they leave on those who see them. How closely in each case does the appearance of the city correspond with the genius of the nation of which it is the capital. The same holds good more or less with the provincial cities of any country. They have each in a minor degree their distinctive evidences of character, and it will hardly be denied that while the North Italian genius is indebted to the cities of Piedmont for perhaps its more robust and vigorous elements, it owes its command of beauty whether of form or colour to Lombardy rather than to Piedmont. It seems to have been ordained that an endemic interest in art should not cross the Po northward to the west of the Ticino, and to this rule Varallo is only partially an exception; the reasons which led to its being an exception at all will be con-

sidered presently. I know, of course, that Novara, and still more Vercelli, contain masterpieces by Gaudenzio Ferrari, but in each case the art was exotic, and with the not very noteworthy exceptions of Lanini, Difendente Ferrari di Chivasso, and Macrino d'Alba, I do not at the moment call to mind the name of a single even high second-class painter or sculptor who has hailed from west of the Valsesia.

The exceptional position of Varallo as regards North Italian art must be referred mainly to its selection by Bernardino Caimi as the site for the New Jerusalem which he founded there at the end of the fifteenth century; a few words, therefore, concerning him will not be out of place here; I learn from Torrotti that he was a "Frate Minore Osservante di S. Francesco," and came of the noble and illustrious Milanese family of the Counts Caimi. He had been Patriarch of the Holy Land, and, as I find stated in Signor Galloni's excellent work already referred to,* had been employed on important missions in the island of Cyprus, chiefly in connection with the reformation of abuses. Full of zeal and devotion he returned to his native country, and ere long conceived the design of reproducing in Italy a copy of

* "Uomini e Fatti," &c., p. 65, &c.

the most important sites in the Holy Land, for the comfort and greater commodity of so many Christians who, being unable to commit themselves to long and weary voyages by land and sea, and among infidels, might gather thence some portion of that spiritual fruit which were otherwise beyond their reach.

Old and mendicant as he was, he was nothing daunted by the magnitude of the task before him, and searched Lombardy from one end to the other in his desire to provide Providence with a suitable abode. For a long while he sought in vain, and could find no place that was really like Jerusalem, but at last, towards the end of 1491, he came to Varallo alone, and had hardly got there before he felt himself rapt into an ecstasy, in the which he was drawn towards the Sacro Monte; when he got up to the plain on the top of the mountain which was then called "La Parete," perceiving at once its marvellous resemblance to Jerusalem, even to the existence of another mountain hard by which was like Calvary, he threw himself on the ground and thanked God in a transport of delight. It is said that for some time previously the shepherds who watched their flocks on this solitary height had been talking of nothing but of heavenly harmonies that had been heard

coming from the sky; that Caimi himself while yet in the Holy Land had been shown this place in a vision; and that on reaching an eminence called Sceletta he had been conducted to the site itself by the song of a bird which sang with such extraordinary sweetness that he had been constrained to follow it.

I should have set this bird down as a blue rock thrush or *passero solitario*, for I know these birds breed yearly on the Sacro Monte, and no bird sings so sweetly as they do, but we are expressly told that Caimi did not reach Varallo till the end of the year, and the *passeri solitarii* have all migrated by the end of August. We have seen, however, that Milano Scarrognini actually founded a chapel in October 1491, so Torrotti is wrong in his date, and Caimi may have come in 1490, and perhaps in August, before the *passeri* were gone. There can be little doubt in fact that he came, or at any rate chose his site, before 1486.

Whatever the bird may have been, Caimi now communicated his design to the Consiglio della Vicinanza at Varallo, through Milano de' Scarrognini, who was a member of the body, and who also gave support in money; negotiations were not finally concluded until the 14th of April 1493, on which day, as we have

already seen, the site of the monastery of S. Maria della Grazie was conveyed to the Padri dell' Osservanza with the concession of a right to build their New Jerusalem on the adjoining mountain—which they had already begun to do for some time past.

Divine assistance was manifest in the ease with which everything had been arranged, but Torrotti goes on to assure us that it was presently made still clearer. The design had been to begin with a reproduction of the Holy Sepulchre, and hardly had the workmen begun to dig for the foundation of this first work, when a stone was found, not only resembling the one which covered the actual Holy Sepulchre itself, but an absolute fac-simile of it in all respects—as like it, in fact, or even more so, than Varallo was to Jerusalem. The testimony to this was so notorious, and the fact was so soon and widely known, that pilgrims flocked in crowds and brought gifts enough to bring the first abode of the Fathers with the chapel beside it to a speedy and successful completion. Everything having been now started auspiciously, and the Blessed Bernardino having been allowed to look, as it were, into the promised land, God took him to Himself on the 5th day of the Ides of February 1496, or—as I have above

said that the inscription on Caimi's tomb declares—in 1499.

The churches, both the one below the mountain in which Gaudenzio's great series of frescoes may be still seen, and the one on the top, which stood on the site now occupied by the large house that stands to the right of the present church, and is called the Casino, were consecrated between the 5th and 7th days of September 1501, and by this time several of the chapels with figures in them had been taken in hand, and were well advanced if not completed.

Fassola's version of Bernardino Caimi's visit is more guarded than Torrotti's is. Before going on to it I will say here the little that need be said about Fassola himself. I find from Signor Galloni's "Uomini e fatti" (p. 208) that he was born at Rassa above Bucioleto in the Val Grande, on the 19th of September 1648. His family had one house at Rassa, and another at Varallo, which last is believed to have been what is now the hotel Croce Bianca, at which I always myself stay. Torrotti, in his preface, claims to have been one of his masters; he also says that Fassola was only eighteen when he wrote his work on the Sacro Monte, and that he had published a work when he was

only fourteen. The note given by Signor Galloni [p. 233] settles it that Fassola was born "anno D. 1648 die 19 septembris hora 22 min. 30," so that either the book lay some years unpublished, or he was over twenty when he wrote it. Like the edition of Caccia already referred to, it is dated a year later than the one in which it actually appeared, so that the present custom of post-dating late autumn books is not a new one. In the preface the writer speaks of his pen as being "tenera non tanto per talento quanto per l'età." In the same preface he speaks of himself as having a double capacity, one as a Delegate to the governing body of the valley, and the other as a canon; but he must mean some kind of lay canon, for I cannot find that he was ever ordained. In 1672 he published his work "La Valsesia descritta," which according to Signor Galloni is more hastily written than his earlier work. On the 14th of December, the same year, he left the Valsesia and travelled to France, keeping a journal for some time, which Signor Galloni tells us still existed in 1873 in the possession of Abate Cav. Carestia of Riva Valdobbia. He went to Paris, and appears to have stayed there till 1683, when he returned to Varallo, and the Valsesia.

He found his country torn by faction, and was immediately hailed by all parties as the one man whom all could agree to elect as Regent General of the Valley. He was elected, and on the 5th of October convened his first general council of the Valsesia. He seems to have been indefatigable as an administrator during the short time he held office, but in the year 1684 was deposed by the Milanese, who on the 3rd of December sent a body of armed men to seize him and take him to Milan. He was warned in time to fly, and escaped to France, where according to some he died, while others say that he settled in Poland and there attained high distinction. Nothing, however, is known for certain about him later than the year 1684 or the beginning of 1685.

In 1686 Torrotti published his book. He says that Fassola during his regency repeatedly desired him "ripigliare questa relatione per commodità dei Pelegrini, Divoti, visitanti," and that so much new matter had come to light since Fassola's time that a new work was called for. Fassola, he says, even in the midst of his terrible misfortunes, continued to take the warmest interest in his native city, and in the Sacro Monte, where it appears he had been saluted by a very memorable and well-known

miracle, which was so well known in Torrotti's time that it was not necessary to tell us what it was. Fassola may or may not have urged Torrotti to write a second work upon the Sacro Monte, but he can hardly have intended him to make it little more than a transcript of his own book. If new facts had come to light they do not appear in Torrotti's pages. He very rarely adds to Fassola, and never corrects him; when Fassola is wrong Torrotti is wrong also; even when something is added I have a strong suspicion that it comes from Fassola's second book. On the whole I am afraid I regard Torrotti as somewhat of a plagiarist—at least as regards his matter, for his manner is his own and is very quaint, garrulous, and pleasing.

Fassola's work is full of inaccuracies, and of such inaccuracies as can only be explained on the supposition that the writer resided mainly at Rassa, wrote his book there, and relied too much upon notes which he did not verify after his work was written. Nevertheless, as Signor Galloni justly says, "he must be allowed the merit of having preserved an immense mass of matter from otherwise almost certain destruction, and his pages when subjected to rigid examination and criticism furnish abundant material to the writer of genuine history."

He leans generally much less towards the miraculous than Torrotti does. After saying, for example, that Bernardino Caimi had returned from Jerusalem in 1481 full of devotion and with the fixed intention of reproducing the Holy City on Italian soil, he continues :—

"With this holy intent the good ecclesiastic journeyed to the mountains of Biella, and thence to the Val d' Ossola, and thence to several places in the Valsesia, which of all others was the valley in which he was most inclined to unburden his mind of the treasure of his heroic design. Finally, arriving at Varallo, as the place of most resort, where most of those would come whose means and goodwill would incline them to works of piety, he resolved to choose the most suitable site that he could here find. According to some, while taking counsel with himself and with all who could help him, the site which we now adore was shown him in a vision; others say that on walking without the town he was seduced by the angelic warbling of a bird, and thus ravished to a spot where he found all things in such order for his design that he settled upon it then and there. Many hold as true the story of certain shepherds who about a fortnight earlier than the coming of the father, heard songs of more than earthly sweetness as they were keeping watch over their flocks by night."

"But," concludes Fassola, with some naïveté considering the reserve he has shown in accepting any of the foregoing stories, "take it in whatever way you will, the inception of the place was obviously miraculous."

CHAPTER V.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE SACRO MONTE.

WHETHER miraculous or not, the early history of the Sacro Monte is undoubtedly obscure, and the reader will probably have ere this perceived that the accounts given by Fassola and Torrotti stand in some need of reconstruction. The resemblance between Varallo and Jerusalem is too far fetched to have had any *bonâ fide* effect upon a man of travel and of affairs, such as Caimi certainly was; it is hardly greater than the famous one between Monmouth and Macedon; there is, indeed, a river—not to say two—at Varallo, and there is a river also only twenty-five miles off Jerusalem; doubtless at one time or another there have been crucifixions in both, but some other reason must be sought for the establishment of a great spiritual stronghold at the foot of the Alps, than a mere desire to find the place which should most remind its founder of the Holy City. Why this great

effort in a remote and then almost inaccessible province of the Church, far from any of the religious centres towards which one would have expected it to gravitate? The answer suggests itself as readily as the question; namely, that it was an attempt to stem the torrent of reformed doctrines already surging over many an Alpine pass, and threatening a moral invasion as fatal to the spiritual power of Rome as earlier physical invasions of Northmen had been to her material power.

Those who see the Italian sub-alpine valleys of to-day as devoted to the Church of Rome are apt to forget how nearly they fell away from her in the sixteenth and seventeeth centuries, and what efforts, both by way of punishment and allurement, she was compelled to make before she could retain them in her grasp. In most of them the ferment caused by the introduction of the reformed doctrines was in the end stamped out; but in some, as in the Valle di Poschiavo, and the Val Bregaglia, Protestantism is still either the predominant creed or not uncommon. I do not mention the Vaudois valleys of Piedmont, for I am told these were Protestant before either Huss or Luther preached.

The Valsesians had ere now given proof of

a tendency towards heresy, but they were a people whom it was worth while making every effort to retain. They have ever been, as we have seen it said already, a vigorous, sturdy, independent race, imbued, in virtue perhaps of their mixed descent, with a large share of the good points both of Southern and Northern nations. They are Italians; but Italians of the most robust and Roman type, combining in a remarkable degree Southern grace and versatility with Northern enterprise and power of endurance. It is no great stretch of imagination to suppose that Bernardino Caimi was alive to dangers that were sufficiently obvious, and that he began with the Val Sesia, partly as of all the sub-alpine valleys the one most imbued with German blood—the one in which to this day the German language has lingered longest, and in which, therefore, ideas derived from Germany would most easily be established—and partly because of the quasi-independence of the Val Sesia, and of its lying out of the path of those wars from which the plains of Lombardy have been rarely long exempt. It may be noted that the movement set on foot by Caimi extended afterwards to other places, always, with the exception of Crea, on the last slopes of the Alps before the plains of Lombardy

and Piedmont begin. Varese, Locarno, Orta, Varallo, Oropa, Graglia, St. Ignazio, not to mention St. Giovanni di Andorno, have all of them something of the spiritual frontier fortress about them, and, I imagine, are all more or less directly indebted to the reformation for their inception.

Confining our attention to Varallo, the history of the Sacro Monte divides itself into two main periods; the first, from the foundation to the visit of S. Carlo Borromeo in 1678; the second, from the visit of S. Carlo to the present day. The first of these periods begins with 1486, in which year the present Sacro Monte was no doubt formally contemplated, if not actually commenced. That it was contemplated is shown by the inscription on Caimi's grave already given, and also by the first of the two deeds given in Signor Galloni's notes, from which it appears* that under the brief of December 21, 1486, Caimi had powers to take over the land now covered by the chapels, *even though he should be absent*—it being evidently intended that the land should be conveyed at once, and before he could return from Jerusalem, for which place he started in 1487. Moreover, there remains one small chapel with

* "Uomini e fatti," p. 83.

frescoes that can hardly be later than 1485–1490. This is now numbered 45, and is supposed by many to be older even than Caimi's first visit. It may be so, but there is nothing to show that it actually was. I have seen a date scratched on it which it is said is 1437, but the four is really a five, which in old writing is often taken for a four, and the frescoes, which in their own way are of considerable merit, would be most naturally assigned to about the date 1485–1490. I do not think there can be a doubt that we have in this chapel the earliest existing building on the Sacro Monte, but find it impossible to form any opinion as to whether it was in existence before Bernardino Caimi's time, or no.

In the second of the two deeds given by Signor Galloni (p. 85), the following passage occurs:—

"Et similiter fecerunt ipsi Sindici, et Procuratores, ut suprà introducendo ipsum Patrem Vicarium ut suprà in Eremitorium sancti Sepulchri existent. in loco ubi dicebatur super pariete, aperiendo eidem ostia dicti Eremitorij, et dando eidem claues Ostiorum dicti eremitorij, et eum deambulari faciendo in eo, et similiter in Hortis dicti Eremitorij, dando eidem in gremium ut suprà de terris, herbis, et frondibus, et lapidibus existen. in locis prædictis, *et similiter in Capella existente subtus crucem, et in Capellam Ascensionis Ædificatam super Monte prædicto.* Qui locus est de membris dicti Monasterii suprascripti."

Neither Signor Galloni, who pointed out this passage to me, nor I, though we have more than once discussed the matter on the ground itself, can arrive at any conclusion as to what was intended by "the chapel now in existence under the cross," nor yet what chapel is intended by "the chapel of the Ascension on the said mountain." It is probable that there was an early chapel of the Ascension, and the wooden figure of Christ on the fountain in the piazza before the church was very likely taken from it, but there is no evidence to show where it stood.

Signor Arienta tells me that the chapel now occupied by the Temptation in the Wilderness was formerly a chapel of the Ascension. He told me to go round to the back of this chapel, and I should find it was earlier than appeared from the front. I did so, and saw it had formerly fronted the other way to what it does now, but among the many dates scrawled on it could find none earlier than 1506, and it is not likely to have been built thirteen years before it got scrawled on.

Some hold the chapels referred to in the deed above quoted from to have included the present Annunciation, Salutation, and sleeping St. Joseph block—or part of it. Others hold

them to have referred to the chapels now filled by the Pietà and the Entombment (Nos. 40 and 41); but it should not be forgotten that by 1493 the chapels of S. Francis and the Holy Sepulchre were already in existence, though no mention is made of them; and there may have been other chapels also already built of which no mention is made. Thus immediately outside the St. Francis chapel and towards the door leading to the Holy Sepulchre, there is a small recess in which is placed an urn of iron that contains the head of Bernardino Caimi with a Latin inscription; and hard by there is another inscription which runs as follows:—

"Magnificus D. Milanus Scarrogninus hoc Sepulcrum cum fabrica sibi contigua Christo posuit die septimo Octobris MCCCCLXXXXI. R. P. Frater Bernardinus de Mediolano Ordinis Minorum de Observ. sacra hujus montis excogitavit loca, ut hic Hierusalem videat qui peragrare nequit."

We may say with some confidence that the present chapel No. 45, those numbered 40 and 41, the block containing the St. Francis and Holy Sepulchre chapels, and probably the Presepio, Adoration of the Shepherds, and Circumcision chapels—though it may be doubted whether these last contained the figures that they now do—were in existence

before the year 1500. Part if not all of the block containing the Sta. Casa di Loreto, in which the Annunciation is now found, is also probably earlier than 1500, as also an early Agony in the Garden now long destroyed, but of which we are told that the figures were originally made of wood. Over and above these there was a Cena, Capture, Flagellation, and an Ascension chapel, all of which contained wooden figures, and cannot be dated later than the three or four earliest years of the sixteenth century. No wooden figure is to be dated later than this, for when once an oven for baking clay had been made (and this must have been done soon after Gaudenzio took the works on the Sacro Monte in hand) the use of wood was discarded never to be resumed.

According to both Fassola and Torrotti, the first chapel erected on the Sacro Monte was that of S. Francesco, with its adjacent reproduction of the Holy Sepulchre. According to Bordiga the first was the entombment, containing nine figures of wood, or, as the earlier writers say, eight. Bordiga probably means that the Entombment was the earliest chapel with figures in it, and the other writers that the St. Francis chapel was the first in which

mass was said. These last speak very highly of the wooden figures in the Entombment chapel, and so more guardedly does Bordiga. I will return to them when I come to the present group of nine by Luigi Marchesi, a sculptor of Saltrio, which were substituted for the old ones in 1826. The early writers say that there was no fresco background to this chapel, and this suggests that the attempt to combine sculpture and painting was not part of the initial scheme, though soon engrafted on to it, inasmuch as this is the only chapel about which I find it expressly stated by early writers that it was without a fresco background ("senza pittura alcuna").* Though there was no fresco background, Bordiga says there was a fresco painted, doubtless done very early in his career, by Gaudenzio Ferrari, outside the chapel just above the iron grating through which the visitor must look. Probably the original scheme was to have sculptured figures inside the chapels, and frescoes outside; by an easy modification these last were transferred from the outside to the inside, and so designed as to form an integral part of the composition: the daring scheme of combining the utmost resources of both painting and sculpture in a

* Fassola, p. 112.

single work was thus gradually evolved rather than arrived at *per saltum.* Assuming, however, the currently received date of 1503 or 1504 as correct for Gaudenzio's frescoes in the present Pietà chapel, the conception as carried out in the greater number of the existing chapels had then attained the shape from which no subsequent departure was made.

Returning to Gaudenzio's fresco outside the S. Francesco chapel, Bordiga says that Caccia gave the following lines on this work :—

> "Sotto un vicino portico di fuore
> Portato a sepelir è di pittura
> Un Cristo; che non mai Zeuxi pittore
> Di questo finse piu bella figura,
> Che un San Francesco possa pareggiare,
> Pinto più inanzi sopra d' un altare."

The reader will note that the fresco is here expressly stated to be "di fuore" or outside and not inside the chapel.

Both Fassola and Torrotti place this fresco on the outside wall of the chapel of St. Francis, but Bordiga is probably right in saying it was on the Entombment chapel. No trace of it remains, nor yet of the other works by Gaudenzio, which all three writers agree were in the S. Francesco chapel, though they must all have been some few years later than the chapel

itself. These consisted of portraits of Milano Scarrognini with Father Beato Candido Ranzo Bernardino Caimi upon the gospel, or right, side of the altar, and of Scarrognini's wife and son with Bernardino Caimi, on the epistle side. According to Bordiga, Gaudenzio also painted a St. Anthony of Padua, and a St. Helena, one on either side the grating. Inside the chapel over the altar was a painting of St. Francis receiving the stigmata, also by Gaudenzio. This is the only one of his works in or about the S. Francesco chapel which still exists; it is now in the pinacoteca of the Museum at Varallo, but is not, so far as I could judge of it, one of his best pictures. The other works were in a decayed condition in 1703, when they were removed, and the chapel was redecorated by Francesco Leva, a painter of Milan.

The Crucifixion chapel of Gaudenzio Ferrari was begun and finished between 1520 and 1530. I have found three excellently written dates of 1529 scrawled upon the fresco background. One of them, "1529 Die 26 Octobre Johannes Antoninus," is especially clear, and the other two leave no doubt what year was intended. I have found no earlier date, but should not be surprised if further search were more successful. I may say in passing that it

seemed to me as though some parts of the scar made by the inscription had been filled with paint, while others had certainly not—as though the work had been in parts retouched, not so very long ago. I think this is so, but two or three to whom I showed what I took to be the new colour were not convinced, so I must leave others to decide the point.

The Magi chapel must be assigned to some date between the years 1530 and 1539—I should say probably to about 1538, but I will return to this later on. Torrotti says that some of the figures on the Christ taken for the last time before Pilate (chapel No. 32) are by Gaudenzio, as also some paintings that were preserved when the Palazzo di Pilato was built, but I can see no sign of either one or the other now; nevertheless it is likely enough that several figures—transformed as we shall presently see that d'Enrico or his assistants knew very well how to transform them—are doing duty in the Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, and Ecce Homo chapels. So cunningly did the workmen of that time disguise a figure when they wanted to alter its character and action that it would be no easy matter to find out exactly what was done; if they could turn an Eve, as they did, into a very passable Roman soldier assisting at the

capture of Christ, they could make anything out of anything. A figure was a figure, and was not to be thrown away lightly.

Soon after the completion of the Magi chapel the work flagged in consequence of the wars then devastating the provinces of North Italy; nevertheless by the middle of the sixteenth century we learn from Torrotti that some nineteen chapels had been completed.

It is idle to spend much time in guessing which these chapels were, when Caccia's work, published in 1565, is sure to be found some day and will settle the matter authoritatively, but the reader will not be far wrong if he sees the Sacro Monte by the year 1550 as consisting of the following chapels: Adam and Eve, Annunciation, Salutation (?), Magi, Adoration of the Infant Jesus by the Shepherds, Adoration by Joseph and Mary, Circumcision, (but not the present figures nor fresco background), Last Supper, Agony in the Garden, Capture, Flagellation, Crowning with thorns (?), Christ taken for the last time before Pilate, the Original journey to Calvary, Fainting Madonna, Crucifixion, Entombment, Ascension, and the old church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary now removed. There were probably one or two others, but there cannot have been many.

In the 1586 edition of Caccia, a MS. copy of which I have before me, the chapels are given as follows: Adam and Eve, Annunciation, and Santa Casa di Loreto, Visit of Mary to Elizabeth, Magi, Joseph and Mary worshipping the Infant Christ, and the Adoration of Shepherds,* Circumcision, Joseph warned to fly, the chapel (but not the figures) of the Massacre of the Innocents, Flight into Egypt Baptism, Temptation in the Wilderness, Woman of Samaria, the chapel (but not the figures) of the Healing of the Paralytic, and the Raising of the Widow's son at Nain, the Raising of Lazarus, Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, Agony in the Garden, Capture, Flagellation, Crowning with thorns, Christ carrying His cross to Calvary (doubtless Tabachetti's chapel), the Fainting of the Virgin, the earlier Journey to Calvary by Gaudenzio (now dispersed or destroyed), Crucifixion, Pietà, Holy Sepulchre, Appearance to Mary Magdalene (now no longer existing).

I should say, however, that I find it impossible to reconcile the two accounts of the journeys to Calvary, given in the prose in-

* These chapels are grouped together in the 1586 edition as "la natività di N.S. nel Presepio," but they are separated, as they doubtless should have been earlier, in the edition of 1590 [1591].

troduction to this work, and in the poetical description that follows it, or rather to understand the topography of the poetical version at all, for the prose account is plain enough. I shall place a MS. copy of the 1586 edition of Caccia's book in the British Museum, before this present volume is published, and will leave other students of Valsesian history to be more fortunate if they can. Poetical descriptions are so far better than prose, inasmuch as there is generally less of them in a page, but on the whole prose has the advantage.

It would be interesting to see the 1565 and 1576 editions of Caccia, and note the changes and additions that can be found in them. The differences between the 1586 and 1590 editions (dated 1587 and 1591—the preface to the second being dated September 25, 1589), are enough to throw considerable additional light upon the history of the place, and if, as I believe likely, we find no mention of Tabachetti's Calvary chapel in the edition of 1576, nor of his other chapels, we should be able to date his arrival at Varallo within a very few years, and settle a question which, until these two editions of Caccia are found, appears insoluble. I must be myself content with pointing out these *libri desiderati* to the future historian.

Some say that the work on the Sacro Monte was almost discontinued between the years 1540 and 1580. I cannot, however, find that this was so, though it appears to have somewhat flagged. I cannot tell whether Tabachetti came to Varallo before S. Carlo or after him. If before, then a good deal of the second impetus may be due to the sculptor rather than to the saint; if after, and as a consequence of S. Carlo's visit, then indeed S. Carlo must be considered as the second founder of the place; but whatever view is taken about this, S. Carlo's visit in 1578 is convenient as marking a new departure in the history of the Sacro Monte, and he may be fairly called its second founder.

Giussano gives the following account of his first visit, which makes us better understand the austere expression that reigns on S. Carlo's face, as we see it represented in his portraits:—

"It was two o'clock in the day before St. Charles arrived at this place, and he had not broken his fast, but before taking anything he visited the different chapels for meditation, of which Father Adorno gave him the points. As evening drew on, he withdrew to take his refection of bread and water, and then returned again to the chapels till after midnight though the weather was very cold" [end of October or beginning of November]. "He then took two hours' rest on a chair, and at five o'clock in the morning resumed his devotions; then, after having said his Mass, he again

allowed himself a small portion of bread and water, and continued his journey to Milan, renewed in fervour of spirit, and with a firm determination to begin again to serve God with greater energy than ever." *

Surely one may add "according to his lights" after the words "to serve God." The second visit of St. Charles to Varallo, a few days before his death, is even more painful reading, and the reader may be referred for an account of it to chapter xi. of the second volume of the work last quoted from. He had a cell in the cloister, where he slept on a wooden bed, which is still shown and venerated, and used to spend hours in contemplating the various sacred mysteries, but most especially the Agony in the Garden, near which a little shelter was made for him, and in which he was praying when his impending death was announced to him by an angel. But this chapel, which was near the present Transfiguration Chapel, was destroyed and rebuilt on its present site after his death, as also the Cena Chapel, which originally contained frescoes by Bernardino Lanini. It was on the Sacro Monte that S. Carlo discharged his last public functions, after which, feeling that he had taken a chill, he left Varallo on the 29th

* English translation of the "Life of St. Charles Borromeo," with preface by Cardinal Manning. Burns & Oates, London and New York, 1884, vol. ii. p. 47.

of October 1584, and died at Milan six days afterwards.

At S. Carlo's instance Pellegrino Pellegrini, called Tibaldi, made a new design for the Sacro Monte, which was happily never carried out, but which I am told involved the destruction of many of the earlier chapels. He made the plan of the Sacro Monte as it stood in his time, which I have already referred to, and designed the many chapels mentioned in the 1586 edition of Caccia as about to be built. Prominent among these was the Temple of Solomon, which was to involve "*una spesa grandissima*," and was to be as like the real temple as it could be made. Inside it were to be groups of figures representing Christ driving out those that bought and sold, and it was to have a magnificent marble portico.

The Palazzo di Pilato, which, as the name denotes, is devoted to the sufferings of Christ under Pontius Pilate, was actually carried out, though not till some years after S. Carlo's death, and not according to Pellegrini's design. It is most probable that the designer of the Palazzo di Pilato, and of the Caiaphas and Herod chapels as we now see them, was Giovanni d' Enrico. "It was in 1608," says Bordiga,*

* "Storia a Guida," ed. 1857, Varallo, p. 68.

writing of the Santa Scala, which leads from the Crowning with Thorns to the Ecce Homo chapels, and which, one would say, must have been one of the first things done when the Palazzo di Pilato was made, "that this work with its steps, exactly twenty-eight in number, was begun, according to the design obtained from Rome by Francesco Testa, who was then Fabbriciere. This is for the information of those who think it is the work of Pellegrini."

Between this year and 1645 the four Pilate chapels, the Ecce Homo, Caiaphas, Herod, present Pietà, Sleeping Apostles, Agony in the Garden, and Christ Nailed to the Cross chapels were either created or reconstructed. These works bear d'Enrico's name in the guide-books, and he no doubt presided over the work that was done in them; but I should say that by far the greater number of the figures in them are by Giacomo Ferro, his assistant, to whom I will return presently, or by other pupils and assistants. Only one chapel, the Transfiguration, belongs to the second half of the seventeenth century, and one, the Christ before Annas, to the eighteenth (1765); one—the present Entombment—belongs to the nineteenth, and one or two have been destroyed, as has been unfor-

tunately the case with the Chiesa Vecchia; but the plan of the Sacro Monte in 1671, which I here give, will show that it was not much different then from what it is at present. The numbers on the chapels are explained as follows:—

1. Gate.
2. Creation of the world and Adam and Eve.
3. Annunciation.
4. Salutation.
5. First Vision of St. Joseph.
6. Magi.
7. Nativity.
8. Circumcision.
9. Second Vision of St. Joseph.
10. Flight into Egypt.
11. Massacre of the Innocents.
12. Baptism.
13. Temptation.
14. Woman of Samaria.
15. Healing the Paralytic.
16. Widow's son at Nain.
17. Transfiguration.
18. Raising of Lazarus.
19. Entry into Jerusalem.
20. Last Supper.
21. Agony in the Garden.
22. Sleeping Apostles.
23. Capture.
24. Caiaphas, and Penitence of St. Peter.
25. Christ before Pilate.
26. Christ before Herod.
27. Christ sent again to Pilate.
28. Flagellation.
29. Crowning with thorns.
30. Christ about to ascend the Santa Scala (not shown on plan).
31. Ecce Homo.
32. Pilate washes his hands.
33. Christ condemned to death.
34. Christ carrying the Cross.
35. Nailing to the Cross.
36. Passion.
37. Deposition from the Cross.
38. Pietà.
39. Entombment (not shown on plan).
40. Chapel of St. Francis.
41. Holy Sepulchre.
42. Appearance to Mary Magdalene.
43. Infancy of the Virgin.
44. Sepulchre of the Virgin.
45. Sepulchre of St. Anne.
46. Ascended Christ over the fountain.
47. Chiesa Vecchia.
48. Chiesa Maggiore.

The view is a bird's-eye one, and there is hardly any hill in reality.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

PLAN OF THE SACRO MONTE IN 1671.

Plate I. *Face p.* 68.

CHAPTER VI.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

THE foregoing outline of the history of the work must suffice for the present. I will reserve further remarks for the space which I will devote to each individual chapel. As regards the particular form the work took, I own that I have been at times inclined to wonder whether Leonardo da Vinci may not have had something to do with it.

Between 1481 and the end of 1499 he was in Milan, and during the later years of this period was the chief authority on all art matters. It is not easy to think that Caimi, who was a Milanese, would not consult him before embarking upon an art enterprise of the first magnitude; and certainly there is a something in the idea of turning the full strength of both painting and sculpture at once on to a single subject, which harmonises well with the magnificent rashness of which we know Leonardo to have been

capable, and with the fact that he was both a painter and a sculptor himself. There is, however, not one scrap of evidence in support of this view, which is based solely on the fact that both the scheme and Leonardo were audacious, and that the first is little likely to have been undertaken without counsel from the second. The actual evidence points rather, as already indicated, in the direction of thinking that the frescoes began outside the chapels, got inside them for shelter, and ere long claimed the premises as belonging no less to themselves than to the statues. The idea of treating full-relief sculptured figures with a view to a pictorial rather than sculpturesque effect was in itself, as undertaken when Gaudenzio was too young to have had a voice in the matter, a daring innovation, even without the adjunct of a fresco background; and the idea of taking a mountain as though it were a book, and illustrating it with a number of such groups, was more daring still. To this extent we may perhaps suppose Caimi to have been indebted to Leonardo da Vinci: the rest is probably due to Gaudenzio, who evolved it in the course of those unforeseen developments of which design and judgment are never slow to take advantage.

To whomsoever the conception may be due, if it had only been carried out by such artists as Tabachetti and Gaudenzio Ferrari, or even Giovanni d'Enrico, to say nothing of Bargnola or Rossetti, (to whichever of the two the Massacre of the Innocents must be assigned,) works like those at Varallo might have been repeated, as indeed they sometimes were, thenceforward to the present day. Unfortunately the same thing was attempted at Orta, and later on at Varese, by greatly inferior men. It is true that some of the groups at Varese, especially the one in the Disputa Chapel, are exceedingly fine, and that there are few chapels even there in which no good or even admirable figures may be found. Still the prevailing spirit at Varese is stagey; the work belongs to an age when art of all kinds was held to consist mainly in exaggeration, and when freedom from affectation had fallen into a disrepute from which it has taken centuries to emerge. Nevertheless the work at Varese is for the most part able; if at times somewhat boisterous and ranting, it is incomparably above the feeble, silly cant of Orta; but unfortunately it is by Orta that English people for the most part judge the attempt to combine sculpture and painting. It is indeed some years since I was at this last-named place,

and remembering how long I knew the Sacro Monte at Varallo without observing the Vecchietto in the Descent from the Cross Chapel, I cannot be sure that there is not some more interesting work at Orta than I now know. I do not think, however, I am far wrong in saying that the chapels at Orta are for the most part exceedingly bad.

So are some even at Varallo itself, but assuredly not most of them. One—I mean, of course, Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary, which contains about forty figures rather larger than life, and nine horses,—is of such superlative excellence as regards composition and dramatic power, to say nothing of the many admirable individual figures comprised in it, that it is not too much to call it the most astounding work that has ever been achieved in sculpture. I know that this is strong language, but have considered my words as much as I care to do. As Michael Angelo's Medicean Chapel errs on the side of over-subtlety, refinement, and the exaggerated idealism from which indeed there is but one step to the *barocco*, so does Tabachetti's on that of over-downrightness, or, as a critic with a cultivated eye might say, with perhaps a show of reason at a first glance, even of vulgarity. Nevertheless, if I could have my choice

whether to have created Michael Angelo's chapel or Tabachetti's, I should not for a moment hesitate about choosing Tabachetti's, though it drove its unhappy creator mad, which the Medicean chapel never did by Michael Angelo. Three other chapels by Tabachetti are also admirable works. Two chapels contain very extensive frescoes by Gaudenzio Ferrari, than which it is safe to say that no finer works of their kind have been preserved to us. The statues by Gaudenzio in the same chapels are all interesting, and some remarkably good. Their arrangement in the Crucifixion Chapel, if not marked by the superlative dramatic power of Tabachetti, is still solemn, dignified, and impressive. The frescoes by Morazzone in Tabachetti's great chapel belong to the decline of art, but there is still much in them that is excellent. So there is in some of those by Tanzio and Melchiorre, Giovanni d'Enrico's brothers. Giovanni d'Enrico's Nailing of Christ to the Cross, with its sixty figures all rather larger than life, challenges a comparison with Tabachetti's, which it will not bear; still it is a great work. So are several of his other chapels. I am not so thoroughly in sympathy with the work of any of the three brothers d' Enrico as I should like to be, but they can-

not be ignored or spoken of without respect. There are excellent figures in some of the chapels by less well-known men; and lastly, there is the Vecchietto, perhaps the finest figure of all, who looks as if he had dropped straight from the heavens towards which he is steadfastly regarding, and of whom nothing is known except that, if not by Tabachetti, he must be by a genius in some respects even more commanding, who has left us nothing save this Melchizedek of a figure, without father, mother, or descent.

I have glanced at some of the wealth in store for those who will explore it, but at the same time I cannot pretend that even the greater number of the chapels on the Sacro Monte are above criticism; and unfortunately some of the best do not come till the visitor, if he takes them in the prescribed order, has already seen a good many, and is beginning to be tired. There is not a little to be said in favour of taking them in the reverse order. As when one has sampled several figures in a chapel and found them commonplace, one is apt to overlook a good one which may have got in by accident of shifting in some one of the several rearrangements made in the course of more than three centuries, so when sampling

the chapels themselves, after finding half a dozen running which are of inferior merit, we approach the others with a bias against them. Moreover, all of them have suffered more or less severely from decay. Rain and snow, indeed, can hardly get right inside the chapels, or, at any rate, not inside most of them, but they are all open to the air, and, at a height of over two thousand feet, ages of winter damp have dimmed the glory even of the best-preserved. In many cases the hair and beards, with excess of realism, were made of horse hair glued on, and the glue now shows unpleasantly; while the paint on many of the faces and dresses has blistered or peeled, leaving the figures with a diseased and mangy look. In other cases, they have been scraped and repainted, and this process has probably been repeated many times over, with inevitable loss of character; for the paint, unless very carefully removed, must soon clog up and conceal delicate modelling in many parts of the face and hands. The new paint has often been of a shiny, oleaginous character, and this will go far to vulgarise even a finely modelled figure, giving it something of the look of a Highlander outside a tobacconist's shop. I am glad to see that Professor Burlazzi, in repainting the

Adam and Eve in the first chapel, has used dead colour, as was done by Tabachetti in his Journey to Calvary. As the figures have often become mangy, so the frescoes are with few exceptions injured by damp and mould. The expense of keeping up so many chapels must be very heavy; it is surprising, therefore, that the general state of repair should be as good as it is. Nevertheless, there is not a chapel which does not require some effort of the imagination before the mind's eye can see it as it was when left by those who made it.

Unless the reader feels equal to this effort, —and enough remains to make it a very possible one—he had better stick to the Royal Academy and Grosvenor Exhibitions. It should go without saying that a work of art, if considered at all, must be held to be as it was when first completed. If we could see Gaudenzio Ferrari's Crucifixion Chapel with its marvellous frescoes as strong and fresh in colour as they were three centuries and a half ago, and with its nearly thirty life-sized human figures and horses in good condition—not forgetting that, whatever Sir Henry Layard may say to the contrary, they are all by one hand; if, again, Tabachetti's great work was seen by us as it was seen by Tabachetti, and Morazzone's really

fine background were not disfigured by damp and mildew, it can hardly be doubted that even "a cultivated eye" would find little difficulty in seeing these two chapels as among the very finest triumphs that have been vouchsafed to human genius; and surely, if this be so, it follows that we should rate them no lower even now. Gaudenzio Ferrari's Crucifixion Chapel, regarded as a single work, conceived and executed by a single artist, who aimed with one intention at the highest points ever attained both by painting and sculpture, and who wielded on a very large scale, in connection with what was then held to be the sublimest and most solemn of conceivable subjects, the fullest range of all the resources available by either, must stand as perhaps the most daringly ambitious attempt that has been made in the history of art. As regards the frescoes, the success was as signal as the daring; and even as regards the sculpture, the work cannot be said to have failed. Gaudenzio the sculptor will not indeed compare with Gaudenzio the painter; still less will he compare with Tabachetti either as a modeller or composer of full-relief figures; but Tabachetti did not paint his own background as well as make his figures, and something must always be allowed to those who are carry-

ing double. Moreover, Tabachetti followed, whereas Gaudenzio led as pioneer in a realm of art never hitherto attempted. Nevertheless, I may be allowed to say that, notwithstanding all Gaudenzio's greatness, I find Tabachetti the strongest and most robust of all the great men who have left their mark on the Sacro Monte at Varallo.

We cannot dismiss such works with cheap commonplaces about Madame Tussaud's—and for aught I know there may be some very good stuff at Madame Tussaud's—or sneer at them as though they must be all much of a muchness, and because the Orta chapels are bad, therefore those at Varallo must be so also. Those who confine themselves to retailing what they take to be art-tips gathered from our leading journals of culture, will probably continue to trade on this not very hardly earned capital, whatever may be urged upon the other side; but those who will take the trouble involved in forming an independent judgment may be encouraged to make investment of their effort here by remembering that Gaudenzio Ferrari ranks as among the few purest and most accomplished artists of the very culminating period of Italian art, and that what he thought good enough to do may be well worth

our while to consider with the best attention we can give to it.

Another point should not be forgotten by those who would form their opinion intelligently. I mean, that they are approaching a class of work with which they are unfamiliar, and must not, therefore, expect to be able to make up their minds about it as they might if the question were one either of painting or sculpture only. Sculpture and painting are here integral parts of a single design, and it is some little time before we grasp this conception so fully to be able to balance duly the merits and demerits of different compositions, even though we eventually get to see that there is an immeasurable distance between the best and worst. I now know, for example, that Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary is greatly finer than Giovanni d'Enrico's Nailing to the Cross. I see this so clearly that I find it difficult to conceive how I can have doubted about it. At the same time, I can remember thinking that one was nearly as good as the other, and this long after I should have found little difficulty in making up my mind about less complex works.

CHAPTER VII.

AIM AND SCOPE OF THE SACRO MONTE.

THE difficulty referred to at the close of the last chapter is the same as that which those who rarely go to a theatre have to get over before they can appreciate an actor. They go to "Macbeth" or "Othello," expecting to find players speaking and acting on the stage much as they would in actual life; and not finding this, are apt to think the acting coarse and unnatural. They forget that the physical conditions of the stage involve compliance with conventions from which there is no escape, and expect the players to play a game which the players themselves know to be impossible, and are not even trying to play. So important is it to understand the standpoint from which the artists at Varallo worked, that I shall venture some further remarks upon their aim and scope before going on to the works themselves.

Their object, or the object of those who com-

missioned them, was to bring the scene with which they were engaged home to the spectator in all its fulness, short of actual life and motion; but in this "short of actual life and motion" what a cutting-out of the part of Hamlet is there not involved. We can spare a good deal of Hamlet; but if the part is totally excised, —even though the Hamlet be Mr. Irving himself,—the play must suffer. To try to represent action without the immediate changes of position and expression which are its most essential features, seems like courting defeat, and to a certain extent defeat does invariably follow the attempt to treat very violent rapid action except loosely and sketchily. Violent action carried to high degree of finish is hardly ever successful in painting or sculpture; a crowd done in Michael Angelo's Medici chapel manner must inevitably fail, and if a crowd is to be treated in sculpture at all, Tabachetti's broad, large-brushed, and somewhat sketchy treatment is the one most to be preferred. In spite, however, of the incomparable success of Tabachetti's work, I am tempted to question whether quiet and reposeful sculpture is not always most permanently pleasing, as not involving so peremptory a demand for the change that cannot, of course, ensue. At any rate, as one lie generally

leads to others, so with the attempt to render action without action's most essential characteristic, there is a departure from realism which involves a host of other departures if the error is to be distributed so as to avoid offence. In other words, convention, or a composition between artist and spectator, whereby, in view of admitted bankruptcy and failure of possible payment in full, a less thing shall be taken as a greater, has superseded nature at a very early point in the proceedings.

Nevertheless, within the limits of the composition we expect to be paid in full; whatever the dividend is we are to have all of it, and we sometimes take a different view of the terms of the settlement to that taken by those with whom we are dealing. It being admitted that the object of the Sacro Monte workmen was to bring a scene home to the spectator in all possible fulness, we expect to have a quotum of our own ideas of the scene, whatever they may be, put before us, and are more or less offended when we find a composition which we consider to be unreal even within its own covenanted limitations. The fault, however, rests greatly with ourselves, in forgetting that it must be the ideal of medieval Italians and not our own that we should look for, and that

their ideas concerning the chief actors in the sacred dramas were not as ours are. For us, the *οἷοι νὺν βρότοι εἰσι* view of history has been gathered to its fathers, and *οἷοι δὴ βρότοι ἦσαν* is reigning in its stead. We believe that we have advanced upon, not degenerated from our ancestors, except here and there as by way of back eddy, but Italians in the Middle Ages may be excused for having been overawed by the remains of the old splendour which met them everywhere; and even if this had not been so, to children and half-educated people that which happened long ago is always grander and larger than any like thing that happened recently. As regards the sacred dramas this grandioseness of conception extended even to the villains of the piece, who must be greater, more muscular, thorough-going, unredeemed villains than any now existing. The realism which would have proved so touching and grateful now—for we should have found it turned into idealism through the impress of that seal which it is time's glory to set upon aged things—would in the Middle Ages have seemed as unworthy, and as much below the dignity of the subject as modern treatment of the same subjects, with modern costumes, would seem to ourselves.

Ages thwart and play at cross purposes with one another, as parents do with children; and our forefathers have been at infinite trouble and expense to give us what we do not want, and have withheld what they might have given with very little trouble, and we should have held as priceless. We cannot help it; it always has been and always will be so. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* is a condition of existence or at any rate of progress, and the unknown of the past takes a splendour reflected from that of the future. The artists and public of the sixteenth century could no more find what they deemed a worthy ideal in their own familiar, and as it seemed to them prosaic age than we in ours, and every age must make its art work to its own liking and not to that of other people. Caimi was thinking mainly of his own generation; he could not wait a couple of hundred years or so till the work should become touching and quaint through age; he wanted it to be effective then and there, which if the Apostles were shown as mere common peasants and fishermen of the then present day, it would not and could not be—not at any rate with the pit, and it was to the pit as well as to the boxes that these pieces were being played. Let the ablest sculptors of the present time be asked

to treat sacred subjects as was attempted at Varallo, with the condition that they must keep closely to the costume of to-day, and they would probably one and all of them decline the task. We know very well that, laugh at it as we may, our costume will three hundred years hence be as interesting as that of any other age, but that is not to the point: it has got to be effective now, whereas our familiarity with it has bred contempt.

In the earlier ages both of painting and sculpture these considerations, obvious as they are, were not taken into account. The first artists during the medieval revival of art rose as little to theory as children do. They found the mere doing at all so difficult that they were at the mercy in great measure of what they could get. The real was as much as, and more than, they could manage, and they would have idealised long before they did, if they had not felt the task too much for them. They could, with infinite trouble, they hardly knew how, save themselves yet so as by fire and get a head or figure of some sort that was not quite unlike what it was meant for, but they could only do this by helping their unpractised memories to the facts morsel by morsel, treating nature as though she were a stuffed set piece, getting her to sit as still for as long a

time as she could be persuaded to do, and then going all over her touch for touch with a brush like the point of a pin. If the early masters had been able to do all they would have liked to have done, no doubt they would most of them have been as vulgar as we are; fortunately their incompetence stood them in good stead and saved them from becoming the Guidos, Domenichinos, and Guercinos, that so many of their more competent successors took so much trouble to become. Incompetence, if amiable and painstaking, will have with it an unconscious involuntary idealism of its own which is perhaps more charming than any that can be attained by aiming at it deliberately; at any rate it will take the thing portrayed apart from the everyday familiar routine of life which is the great enemy of fancy and the ideal; but the artists of the Sacro Monte had got far beyond the point at which incompetence could be of much use to them, and had to find some other means whereby to steer clear of the everyday life which to the public for whom they had to play, would have appeared so vulgar, and to us so infinitely more delightful than much that they have actually left us. These means they could only find in much the same quarters as dramatic writers and players find them on the

stage, and to a certain extent no doubt the Varallo chapels, like all other attempts to place a scene upon a stage, must submit to the charge of being more or less stagey, but—more especially considering that they are seen by daylight, —it is surprising how little stagey they are.

Also, like all other attempts to place a scene upon the stage, they will be found to consist of a few stars, several players of secondary importance, and a certain number of supers. It is a mistake to attempt, as I am told is attempted at the *Comédie Française*, to have all the actors of first-class merit. They kill one another even in a picture, and on the whole in any work of art it is better to concentrate the main interest on a sufficient number of the most important figures, and to let the setting off of these be the chief business of the remainder. Gaudenzio Ferrari hardly understood this at all, and has no figures which can be considered as mere stage accessories. Tabachetti understood it, but could hardly bring himself down to the level of his supers. D'Enrico understood it perhaps a shade too well; he was a man of business as well as of very considerable genius, and turned his supers over to Giacomo Ferro, who might be trusted to keep them sufficiently commonplace to show his own work to advantage. It

must be owned, however, that the greater number of D'Enrico's chapels would be better if there had been a little more D'Enrico in them and less Giacomo Ferro, and if the D'Enrico had been always taking pains.

We, of course, should have preferred the figures in the Varallo chapels to be all of them as realistic as the artist could make them, provided he chose good types, as a good man may be very well trusted to do. Whenever we get a bit of realism as in the Eve, and Sleeping St. Joseph of Tabachetti, in the Herod, laughing boys, and Caiaphas of D'Enrico, and still more in the Vecchietto, or in the three or four of the figures in the St. Eusebius Chapel at Crea, we accept it with avidity, and we may be sure that the masters who gave us the figures above-named could have given us any number equally realistic if they had been inclined to do so. Tabachetti's instinct was certainly towards realism as far as he dared, but even he is not in most cases realistic—not, I mean, in the sense of making his personages actual life-like portraits. That he was not more so than he is is probably due to some of the considerations on which I have above imperfectly dwelt, and to others that have escaped myself, but were patent enough to him.

One other practical consideration would make against realism in such works as those at Varallo, I mean the fact that if the figures were to be portraits of the Varallo celebrities of the time, the whole place would have been set by the ears in the competition as to who was to be represented and with what precedence. It was only by passing a kind of self-denying ordinance and forbidding portraiture at all that the work could be carried out. Here and there, as in the case of Tabachetti's portrait of the Countess Solomoni of Serravalle in his Journey to Calvary, or as in that of the Vecchietto (in each case a supposed benefactress and benefactor) an exception was made; in most others it seems to have been understood that whatever else the figures were to be, they must not be portraits.

CHAPTER VIII.

GAUDENZIO FERRARI, TABACHETTI, AND GIOVANNI D'ENRICO.

BEFORE going through the various chapels *seriatim*, it may be well to give a short account of three out of the four most interesting figures among the numerous artists who worked on the Sacro Monte. By these I mean, of course, Gaudenzio Ferrari, Tabachetti, Giovanni d'Enrico, and the sculptor, whoever he may have been, of the Massacre of the Innocents chapel. I take my account of Gaudenzio chiefly from Colombo's admirable work, and from the not less excellent notice by Signor Tonetti, that appeared in the "Museo Storico ed Artistico Valsesiano" for July and August 1885.

Gaudenzio Ferrari was born, according to the general belief, in 1484, but Colombo shows reasons for thinking that this date is some four or five years too late. His father was named Antonio Lanfranco or Franchino.* He too

* In the register of the houses in Varallo, taken in 1536, his house is thus described—"*Magister Gaudentius pictor fqm*

was a painter, but nothing is known of him or his works beyond the fact that he lived at Valduggia, where his son Gaudenzio was born, married a woman whose surname was Vinzio, and was dead by 1510. Gaudenzio in his early years several times signed his pictures with his mother's name, calling himself Vincius, De Vincio, or De Vince.

He is generally said to have studied first under Gerolamo Giovenone of Vercelli, but this painter was not born till 1491, and we have the authority of Lomazzo for saying that Gaudenzio's chief instructor was Stefano Scotto, a painter of Milan, who kept a school that was more or less a rival to that of Leonardo da Vinci. I have myself no doubt that Gaudenzio Ferrari has given Scotto's portrait in at least three of the works he has left behind him at Varallo, but will return to this subject when I come to deal with the various places in which these portraits appear. His first works of importance, or at least the earliest that remain to us, are probably in or in the immediate vicinity of Varallo; but little is known of his early

Magistri Franchini Vallis Ugiæ habitator Varalli, habet sedimen unum cum domo una magna plodata et alia contigua peleis, et curte ante, et curteto ad plateam putei, cui cohœret Franciscus Draghettus sive de Boglia et strata, et soror Catarina de Pioleto." (See Signor Tonetti's Memoir.)

years and work, beyond what is comprised in the three pages that form the second chapter of Colombo's book. There is an early *ancona* at La Rocca, near Varallo, another in the *parocchia* of Gattinara, and possibly a greatly damaged Pietà in the cloisters of Sta. Maria delle Grazie at Varallo may be, as it is said to be, an early work by Gaudenzio. Besides these, the wreck of the frescoes on the Pietà chapel on the Sacro Monte, and other works on the same site, now lost, belong to his earlier years.

Some believe that about the year 1506 he travelled to Perugia, Florence, and Rome, where he made the acquaintance of Raphael, and perhaps studied under Perugino, but Colombo has shown on what very slender, if any, grounds this belief is based, and evidently inclines to the belief that Gaudenzio never went to Rome, nor indeed, probably, outside Lombardy at all. The only one of Gaudenzio's works in which I can myself see anything that may perhaps be called a trace of Umbrian influence, is in the fresco of Christ disputing with the Doctors, in the chapel of Sta. Margherita, in the Church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie at Varallo. This fresco, as Signor Arienta has pointed out to me, contains a strong reminiscence of the architectural background in Raphael's school of Athens; it

was painted—so far as an illegible hieroglyphic signature can be taken as read, and so far as internal evidence of style may be relied upon, somewhere about the year 1507. If Gaudenzio was for the moment influenced by Raphael, he soon shook off the influence and formed a style of his own, from which he did not depart, except as enriching and enlarging his manner with advancing experience. Moreover, Colombo (p. 75) points out that the works by Raphael to which Gaudenzio's Disputa is supposed to present an analogy, were not finished till 1511, and are hence probably later than Gaudenzio's fresco. Perhaps both painters drew from some common source.

In 1508 he was at Vercelli, and on the 26th of July signed a contract to paint a picture for the church of S. Anna. He is described in the deed as "Gaudentius de Varali." He had by this time married his first wife, by whom he had two children, Gerolamo and Margherita, born in 1508 and 1512. In 1510 he undertook to paint an altar-piece for the main church at Arona, and completed it in 1511, signing the work "*Magister Gaudentius de Vince, filius quondam magistri Lanfranchi habitator vallis Siccidæ.*" In 1513 he painted the magnificent series of frescoes in the church of Sta. Maria

delle Grazie at Varallo, signing the work and dating it, this time more legibly than he had done his earlier work in the chapel of St. Margaret. In July 1514 he signed a contract to paint an altarpiece for the Basilica of S. Gaudenzio at Novara. It was to be completed within eighteen months from the date of the contract and doubtless was so, but Gaudenzio found a good deal of difficulty in getting his money, which was not paid in full till 1521. He is occasionally met with at Novara and Vercelli between the years 1515 and 1524, but his main place of abode was Varallo.

No date can be positively assigned for his great Crucifixion chapel on the Sacro Monte, but it belongs probably to the years 1524–1528. I have already said that I can find no dates scrawled on the walls earlier than 1529. Such dates may be found yet, but if they are not found, it may be assumed that the chapel was not thrown open to the public much before that year. There is still a little relievo employed in the fresco background, but not nearly so much as in the church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, and the increase of freedom is so evident that it is difficult not to suppose an interval of a good many years between the two works. I gather that by the year 1520 Gaudenzio had abandoned

the use of gold and of *relievo* in painting, but he may have made an exception in the case of a work which was to consist both of sculpture and painting; and there is indeed a good deal to be said in favour of relievo in such a case, as helping to unite the sculptured and painted portions of the work. Even in the Magi chapel, the frescoes of which are several years later than those in the Crucifixion chapel, there are still a few bosses of relievo in the horses' trappings. The date usually assigned to the Crucifixion chapel is 1524, and, in default of more precise knowledge, we shall do well to adhere to the date 1524–1528 already suggested.

About 1524 Gaudenzio painted a picture for the Sacristy of the Cathedral of Novara, and Signor Tonetti says that the very beautiful picture behind the high altar in the church of S. Gaudenzio at Varallo is generally assigned to about the same period. He goes on to say that in 1526 Gaudenzio was certainly working at his native village of Valduggia, where, in 1524 or 1525, a chapel had been erected in honour of S. Rocco, who it was supposed had kept the Valsesia free from the plague that had devastated other parts of Italy. This chapel Gaudenzio decorated with frescoes that have now disappeared, but whose former existence

is recorded in an inscription placed in 1793, when the chapel was restored. The inscription runs: "*Quod populus à peste denfensori erigebat an* MDXXVI *Gaudentius Ferrarius patritius ex voto picturâ decorabat*," &c.

In 1528 he transferred his abode to Vercelli, and about the same year married again. His second wife was a widow who had a boy of ten years old by Giovanni Antonio del Olmo, of Bergamo. Her name was Maria Mattia della Foppa; she came from Morbegno in the Valtellina, and was of the same family as Vincenzo Foppa, the reputed founder of the Milanese school of painting. In 1532 he married his daughter Margherita to Domenico Pertegalle, surnamed Festa, of Crevola near Varallo—he and his son Gerolamo undertaking to give her a dowry of 500 *lire imperiale*, payable in four years, and secured by mortgage on Gaudenzio's house in Varallo.

In 1536 he painted the cupola of the church of the Madonna dei Miracoli at Saronno; he then returned to Vercelli, but his abode and movements are somewhat obscure till 1539, when it is certain that he left Varallo for ever, settled in Milan, and died there between the years 1546 and 1549. He does not appear to have continued to reside in Vercelli after 1536;

we may perhaps, therefore, think that he returned for a time to Varallo, and that the frescoes on the Magi chapel should be given to some date between 1536 and 1539. They are certainly several years later than those in the Crucifixion chapel; but I will return to these frescoes when I come to the Magi chapel itself.

In 1539 he lost his son Gerolamo, and Colombo ascribes his departure from Varallo to grief; but we cannot forget that in the year 1538 there broke out a violent quarrel between the ecclesiastics of the Sacro Monte and the lay governors of Varallo. Fassola says that in 1530 Gio. Ant. Scarrognini, grandson of Milano Scarrognini, and some time afterwards Gio. Angiolo Draghetti, were made Fabbricieri. The election of this last was opposed by the ecclesiastics, who wished to see certain persons elected who were already proctors of the convent, but the Vicini held out, and carried the day. Party feeling ran so high, and the Fathers wished to have such absolute control over the keys of the various money boxes attached to the chapels, and over all other matters, that it may well have been difficult for Gaudenzio to avoid coming into collision with one or both of these contending parties; matters came to a

head in the year 1538, and his leaving Varallo for ever about this time may, perhaps, be referred to his finding himself in an intolerable position, as well as to the death of his son; but, however this may be, he sold his house on the 5th of August, 1539, for seven hundred *lire imperiali*, and for the rest of his life resided in Milan, where he executed several important works, for which I must refer my readers to the pages of Colombo.

The foregoing meagre notice is all that my space allows me to give concerning the life of this great master. I will conclude it with a quotation from Signor Morelli which I take from Sir Henry Layard's recent edition of Kugler's Hand-book of Painting (vol. ii. p. 424). Signor Morelli is quoted as saying—

"Gaudenzio Ferrari is inferior to very few of his contemporaries, and occasionally, as in some of those groups of men and women in the great Crucifixion at Varallo, he might challenge comparison with Raphael himself."

It would be a bad business for Raphael if he did. Gaudenzio Ferrari was what Raphael is commonly believed to have been. I do not mean, that he was the prince of painters—such expressions are always hyperbolical; there has been no prince of painters; I mean that Gaudenzio Ferrari's feeling was profound, whereas

Raphael's was at best only skin deep. Nevertheless Signor Morelli is impressed with Ferrari's greatness, and places him, "for all in all, as regards inventive genius, dramatic life, and picturesqueness * * far above Luini." Bernardino Luini must stand so very high that no one can be placed far above him; nevertheless, it is hard not to think that Gaudenzio Ferrari was upon the whole the stronger man.

TABACHETTI.

Great and fascinating as Gaudenzio was, I have already said that I find Tabachetti a still more interesting figure. He had all Gaudenzio's love of beauty, coupled with a robustness, and freedom from mannerism and self-repetition, that are not always observable in Gaudenzio's work. If Gaudenzio has never received anything approaching to his due meed of praise, Tabachetti may be almost said never to have been praised at all. In Varallo, indeed, and its neighbourhood he is justly regarded as a giant, but the art world generally knows not so much as his name. Cicognara, Lübke, and Perkins know not of his existence, nor of that of Varallo itself, nor of any Valsesian school of sculpture. I have shown that so admirable a writer as Mr. King never even alludes to him, while the most

recent authority of any reputed eminence on Italian art thinks that the Titan of terra-cotta was a painter and a pupil of Gaudenzio Ferrari.

Zani, indeed, in his "*Enciclopedia Metodica*,"* and Nagler in his "*Künstler Lexicon*,"† to which works my attention was directed by Mr. Donoghue of the British Museum, both mention Tabachetti. The first calls him "*bravissimo*," but makes him a Novarese, and calls him "*Scultore, plasticatore, Pittore*," and "*Incisore di stampe à bulino*." The second says that Bartoli (Opp. mor. I. 2), calls him a Flemish sculptor; that he made forty small chapels and several hermitages at Crea in the Monferrato district; and that he also worked much at Varallo. I have in vain tried to find the passage in Bartoli to which Nagler refers, and should be much obliged to any one who is more fortunate if he will give me a fuller reference. The "Opp. mor." referred to appears to be a translation of the "Opuscoli morali" of L. B. Alberti, published at Venice in 1568, which is too early for Tabachetti. I have had Bartoli's translation before me, but could discover nothing. Nagler's words run :—

"Tabachetti Johann Baptist, nennt Bartoli (Opp. mor.

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* Parma, 1823. † Munich, 1841.

I. 2), einen Niederländischen Bildhauer, ohne seine Lebenzeit zu bestimmen. In der Kirche U.L.F. Tu Creo (*sic*) (Montferrat) stellte er in vierzig kleinen capellen die Geschichte der heil. Jungfrau, des Heilandes und einiger Einsidler dar. Auch in Varallo arbeitete er vieles."

If little is known about Gaudenzio we know still less about Tabachetti. I do not believe that more is yet ascertained than I can give in the next few pages. His name was Jean Baptiste Tabaquet, and he came from Dinant in Belgium. This fact has only come to my knowledge within the last few weeks, and I have been unable to go to Dinant and see whether anything can be there made out about him. I will thankfully receive any information which any one is good enough to send me upon this subject. It is not known when he came to Varallo, but by the year 1586 his great Calvary chapel was undoubtedly finished, as also, I imagine, the Adam and Eve, and Temptation chapels, all three of which are mentioned in the 1586 edition of Caccia. In the 1590 edition, the abbreviated word "bellissi." has been added to the description of the Calvary chapel, as though it were an oversight in the earlier edition to take no note of the remarkable excellence of the work: there can be no doubt, therefore, that Bordiga and the other principal authorities are wrong in dating this chapel 1606.

How much earlier it may be than 1586 I cannot determine till the missing editions of Caccia are found, but there is not enough other work of Tabachetti's on the Sacro Monte to let us suppose that he had worked there for very many years.

Both Fassola and Torrotti say that he began the Visit of Mary to Elizabeth, but went mad, leaving the work to be completed by another artist. It was generally supposed that this was the end of him, but there can be no doubt that, if ever he went mad at all, it was only for a short time, as a consequence of over-fatigue, and perhaps worry, over his gigantic work, the Journey to Calvary chapel. That he was either absent from Varallo, or at Varallo but unable to work, between the years 1586 and 1590, is certain, for, in the first place, there is no work on the Sacro Monte that can possibly be given to him during these years, and in the second, if he had been available, considering the brilliant success of his Calvary chapel, the Massacre of the Innocents, which dates from 1586–1590, would surely have been entrusted to him, instead of to Rossetti or Bargnola—whichever of these two is the rightful sculptor. Nevertheless it is certain that after the end of 1589, to which date the 1591 edition of Caccia

appears by its preface to belong, Tabachetti reappeared in full force, did one chapel of extreme beauty—the first Vision of St. Joseph—and nothing more—unless indeed the Vecchietto be assigned to this date. We know this, inasmuch as the First Vision of St. Joseph chapel is not mentioned at all in either the 1586 or 1590 editions of Caccia, and was evidently not yet even contemplated, whereas the Visit of Mary to Elizabeth, over which he is supposed to have gone mad, is given in both as completed.

Tabachetti was summoned to Crea in 1591, and was buying land and other property in 1600, 1602, 1604, 1605, 1606, and 1608, at Serralunga, close to Crea, where deeds which still exist say that he resided. There are many families named Tabachetti still living in the immediate neighbourhood of Serralunga, who are doubtless descended from the sculptor. After 1608 nothing more is known of him. At Varallo, over and above his work on the Sacro Monte, there is an exceedingly beautiful Madonna by him, in the parish church of S. Gaudenzio, and one head of a man with a ruff—a mere fragment—which Cav. Prof. Antonini showed me in the Museum, and assured me was by Tabachetti. I know of no other work by him except what remains at Crea, about

which I will presently write more fully. I am not, however, without hope that search about Liège and Dinant may lead to the discovery of some work at present overlooked, and, as I have said, will thankfully receive information.

I will conclude with a note taken from p. 47 of Part I. of Cav. Alessandro Godio's admirable "Cronaca di Crea." *

The note runs :—

"The present writer found himself involved in a long dispute, through having entered the lists against the Valsesian writers, who reckon Tabachetti among the distinguished sons of the Val Sesia, and for having said that he was born in Flanders. After a more successful search in the above-named [Vercelli?] archive, under the letter B No. 6, over and above the deeds of 1600 and 1606, already referred to in the 'Vesillo della libertà,' No. 39, Sept. 5, 1863, I found, under numbers 308, 417, 498, 622, of the unarranged papers of Notary Teodoro Caligaris, four more deeds dated 1602, 1604, 1605, 1608, in which the Sculptor Gio. Battista Tabachetti is not only described as a Fleming, but his birthplace is given as follows: "*Vendidit, tradidit nobili Joanni Tabacheto filio quondam nobili Gulielmi de Dinante de Liesa* [*Liège*] *nunc incola Serralungæ.*" Since, then, he was buying considerable property at Serralunga during the above-named year, it is plain that he did not work continuously at Varallo from 1590 to 1606, as contended by the Valsesian writers quoted by An. Cav. Carlo Dionisotti, the distinguished author of the Valle Sesia. Moreover, from the year 1590 and onward the chapels of

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* Torino-Tipografia S. Giuseppe—Collegio degli Artigianelli Corso Palestro, No. 14. 1887.

Crea were begun, and of these, by advice of Monsignor Tullio del Carretto, Bishop of Casale, at the bidding of Michel Angelo da Liverno, who was Vicar of Crea, Tabachetti designed not fifteen but forty, and found himself at the head of the direction of the great work that was then engaging the attention of the foremost Italian artists of the day."

Giovanni D'Enrico.

For my account of Giovanni D'Enrico I turn to Signor Galloni's "*Uomini e fatti celebri di Valle Sesia.*" He was second of three brothers, Melchiorre, Giovanni, and Antonio, commonly called Tanzio, who were born at the German-speaking village of Alagna, that stands at the head of the Val Sesia. Signor Galloni says that the elder brother, Melchiorre, painted the frescoes in the Temptation chapel in 1594, and the Last Judgment on the facciata of the parish church at Riva in 1597.

The house occupied by the family of D'Enrico was, as I gather from a note communicated to Signor Galloni by Cav. Don Farinetti of Alagna, in the fraction of Alagna called Giacomolo, where a few years ago a last descendant of the family was still residing. The house is of wood, old and black with smoke; on the wooden gallery or lobby that runs in front of it, and above the low and narrow doorways, there is an inscription or verse of the Bible, "*Allein Gott*

Ehere," dated 1609. The small oratory hard by is said to have been also the property of the D'Enrico family, and in the *ancona* of the little altar there is a picture representing the Virgin of not inconsiderable merit, with a beautiful gilded frame in excellent preservation. On the background of this picture there is the stemma of the D'Enrico family, and an inscription in Latin bearing the names of John and Eva D'Enrico.

The exact dates of the births of the three brothers are unknown, but the eldest and youngest were described in a certificate of good character, dated February 11, 1600, as "*juvenes bonæ vocis, conditionis et famæ,*" so that if we assume Melchiorre to have been born in 1575,* Giovanni in 1580, and Antonio in 1585, we shall, in no case, be more than five years or so in error. I own to being able to see little merit in any of Melchiorre's work, of which the reader will find a sample in the frescoes behind the old Adam and Eve, which is given to face p. 121, but it is believed that he for the most part painted the terra-cotta figures, rather than backgrounds. Nor do I like the work of Tanzio—which may be seen, perhaps, to the best advantage in the Herod chapel. Tanzio,

* See Signor Galloni's first and tenth notes, pp. 175 and 180.

however, was a stronger man than Melchiorre. Giovanni was incomparably the ablest of the three brothers, and it is to him alone that I will ask the reader to devote attention.

Signor Galloni calls Giovanni D'Enrico a pupil of Tabachetti, probably following Bordiga, but I have not seen the evidence on which this generally received opinion is based; Tabachetti had finally left Varallo by 1591, when Giovanni D'Enrico was little more than a child, and though he may have been sent to work under Tabachetti at Crea, I have not come across anything to show this was so. He was an architect as well as sculptor, and is believed to have made the modification of Pellegrino Tibaldi's designs that was ultimately adopted for the Palazzo di Pilato, Caiaphas, and Herod chapels. He was also architect of the Chiesa Maggiore on the Sacro Monte, his design having been approved April 1, 1614. He is believed to have done a Madonna and child, a St. Rocco, and a St. Sebastian in the parish church at Alagna; he also sent many figures away, some of which may possibly be found in the disused chapels of Graglia, if indeed these contain anything at all. He died at Montrigone near Borgosesia in 1644, while superintending the work of his pupil and collabo-

rateur Giacomo Ferro, who, it is said, has placed his master's portrait near the bed of S. Anna in his chapel of the Birth of the Virgin (?) at Montrigone. Others say that the figure in question does not represent D'Enrico, and that his portrait is found in a niche in the chapel itself, but Signor Galloni assures us that there is nothing but tradition in favour of either view.

Giacomo Ferro appears to have been his only pupil and his only collaborateur. There can, I think, be little doubt that the greater part of the work generally ascribed to D'Enrico is really by Giacomo Ferro, and the uncertainty as to what figures are actually by D'Enrico himself makes it very difficult to form a just opinion about his genius. Some chapels are given to him, as for example the Flagellation and Crowning with Thorns, which are mentioned as completed in the 1586 edition of Caccia, when D'Enrico was at most a child. True, he may have remodelled these chapels, but I have not yet met with evidence that he actually did so, though I dare say such evidence may exist without my knowing it.

In those in which he was undoubtedly assisted by Giacomo Ferro, as for example the Caiaphas, Herod, four Pilate, and Nailing to the Cross chapels, with possibly the Ecce Homo, perhaps

the safest rule will be to give the few really excellent figures that are to be found in each of them to D'Enrico himself and to ascribe all the inferior work, of which unfortunately there is too much, to Giacomo Ferro. That the assistance rendered by him was on a very large scale may be gathered from the fact that there was a deed drawn up between him and his master whereby he was to receive half the money that was paid to D'Enrico,—a quasi partnership indeed seems to have existed between the two sculptors. This deed is referred to by Signor Galloni on page 178 of his "Uomini e Fatti," and on the same page he gives us an extract from a lawsuit between Giacomo Ferro and the town of Varallo which gives us a curious insight into the manner in which the artists of the Sacro Monte were paid. From a *procès-verbal* in connection with this suit Signor Galloni quotes the following extract:—

"And further the said deputies allege that in the accounts rendered by the said master Giovanni D'Enrico in respect of the pontifical thrones in the Caiaphas and Nailing to the Cross chapels, these have been valued at the rate of four statues for each several throne and horse, whereas it appears from old accounts rendered by other statuaries that they have been hitherto charged only at the rate of three statues for each throne and horse. Wherefore the said deputies claim to deduct the overcharge of one statue for each horse and throne, which being thirteen at the rate of 10

and a quarter scudi for each figure, would give a total deduction of 132 and a half scudi."

It appears in another part of the same *procès-verbal* that Giovanni D'Enrico had been paid in 1640 the sum of 4240 lire and 8 soldi.

Giacomo Ferro and his brother Antonio were Giovanni D'Enrico's heirs, from which it would appear that he either died unmarried, or left no children.

To say that D'Enrico will compare with Tabachetti would be an obvious exaggeration, and, indeed, there are only very few figures on the Sacro Monte about which we can feel certain that they are by him at all. The Caiaphas, Herod, Laughing Boys in the Herod chapel, and the Man with the Two Children in the Ecce Homo chapel cannot, I think, be given to any one else, but at this moment I do not call to mind more than some fourteen or fifteen figures out of the three hundred or so that are ascribed to him, about which we can be as certain that they are by D'Enrico as we can be that most of those given to Tabachetti and Gaudenzio are actually by them. For not only have we to reckon with Giacomo Ferro, who, if he had half the pay, we may be sure did not less than half the figures, and probably very much more, but we must reckon with the

figures taken from older chapels when reconstructed, as in D'Enrico's time was the case with several. What became of the figures in Gaudenzio Ferrari's original Journey to Calvary chapel, and in other works by him that were cancelled when the Palazzo di Pilato chapel was built? It is not likely they were destroyed if by any hook or crook they could be made to do duty in some other shape; more probably they are most of them still existing up and down D'Enrico's various chapels, but so doctored, if the expression may be pardoned, that Gaudenzio himself would not know them. In the Ecce Homo chapel we can say with confidence that the extreme figure to the left is by Gaudenzio, and has been taken from some one of his chapels now lost; we are able to detect this by an accident, but there are other figures in the same chapel and not a few elsewhere, about which we can have no confidence that they have not been taken from some earlier chapel either by Gaudenzio or some one else. What, then, with these figures, and what with Giacomo Ferro, it is not easy to say what D'Enrico did or did not do.

The intercalated figures have been fitted into the work with admirable skill, nevertheless they do not form part of design, and make it

want the unity observable in the work of Tabachetti and Gaudenzio. They have been lugged into the composition, and no matter how skilful their introduction, are soon felt, as in the case of the Vecchietto, to have no business where they are. Moreover, D'Enrico shows his figures off, which Tabachetti never does: the result is that in his chapels each figure has its attention a good deal drawn to the desirableness of neither being itself lost sight of, nor impeding the view of its neighbours. This is fatal, and though Giacomo Ferro is doubtless more practically guilty in the matter than D'Enrico, yet D'Enrico is the responsible author of the work, and must bear the blame accordingly. Standing once with Signor Pizetta of Varallo, before D'Enrico's great Nailing of Christ to the Cross chapel, I asked him casually how he thought it compared with Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary. He replied "*Questo non sacrifica niente*," meaning that Tabachetti thought of the action much and but little of whether or no the actors got in each other's way, whereas D'Enrico was mainly bent on making his figures steer clear of one another. Thus his chapels want the concert and unity of action that give such life to Tabachetti's. Nevertheless, in spite of the defect

above referred to, it is impossible to deny that the sculptor of the Herod and Caiaphas figures was a man of very rare ability, nor can the general verdict which assigns him the third place among the workers on the Sacro Monte be reasonably disputed. But this third place must be given rather in respect of quantity than quality, for in dramatic power and highly-wrought tragic action he is inferior to the sculptor, whoever he may be, of the Massacre of the Innocents chapel, to which I will return when I come to the chapel in question.

I may say in passing that Cicognara, Lübke, and Perkins have all omitted to mention Giovanni D'Enrico as a sculptor, though Nagler mentions his two brothers as painters. Nagler gives the two brothers D'Enrico as all bearing the patronymic Tanzio, which I am told is in reality only a corruption of the Christian name of the third brother. Zani mentions Giovanni D'Enrico as well as his two brothers, and calls him "*celebre*," but he calls all the three brothers "Tanzii, Tanzi, Tanzio, or Tanzo."

CHAPTER IX.

THE ASCENT, AND THE FIRST FOUR CHAPELS.

THE ascent to the Sacro Monte begins immediately after the church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie has been passed, and is made by a large broad road paved with rounded stones, and beautifully shaded by the chestnuts that grow on the steep side of the mountain. The old road up the mountain was below the present, and remains of it may yet be seen. Ere long a steeper narrower road branches off to the right hand, which makes rather a shorter cut, and is commonly called the "*Strada della Madonna.*" From this name it has become generally believed that the Madonna once actually came to Varallo to see the Sacro Monte, and took this shorter road. There is no genuine tradition, however, to this effect, and the belief may be traced to misapprehension of a passage in Fassola and Torrotti, who say that the main road represents the path taken by Christ himself on his journey to Calvary, while the other symbolises the short

cut taken by the Virgin when she went to rejoin him after his resurrection. When he was *Assistente*, which I gather to have been much what the Director of the Sacro Monte is now, Torrotti had some poetry put up to say this.

At the point where the two roads again meet there is a large wooden cross, from which the faithful may help themselves to a chip. That they do get chips is evident by the state of the cross, but the wood is hard, and none but the very faithful will get so much but that plenty will be left for those who may come after them. I saw a stout elderly lady trying to get a chip last summer; she was baffled, puzzled, frowned a good deal, and was perspiring freely. She tried here, and she tried there, but could get no chip; and presently began to cry. Jones and I had been watching her perplexity, as we came up the *Strada della Madonna*, and having a stouter knife than hers offered to help her. She was most grateful, when, not without difficulty, Jones succeeded in whittling for her a piece about an inch long, and as thick as the wood of a match box. "Per Bacco," she exclaimed, still agitated, and not without asperity, "I never saw such a cross in my life." The old cross, considered to be now past further whittling, was lying by the roadside ready to

be taken away. I had wanted to get the lady a chip from this, thinking it looked as if it would lend itself more easily to the design, but she said it would not do. They have a new cross every year, and they always select a hard knotty uncompromising piece of wood for the purpose. The old is then taken away and burnt for firewood.

Of this cross Fassola says it was here ("*e quì fù dove*") the Virgin met her son, and that for this reason a small chapel was placed rather higher up, which represents the place where she took a little rest, and was hence called the Capella del Riposo. It was decorated with frescoes by Gaudenzio, which have long since disappeared; these were early works, and among the first undertaken by him on the Sacro Monte; the chapel remains, but may, and probably will, be passed without notice. A little higher still, there is another very small and unimportant chapel containing a decayed St. Jerome by Giovanni D'Enrico, and above this, facing the visitor at the last turn of the road, is the chapel erected in memory of Cesare Maio, or Maggi, a Neapolitan, Marquis of Moncrivelli, and one of Charles the Fifth's generals. He died in 1568. Many years before his death he had commanded an

armed force against the Valsesians, but when his horse, on approaching Varallo, caught sight of the Sacro Monte, it genuflected three times and pawed a great cross on the road with its feet. This had such an effect upon the rider that he had thenceforward to become a munificent benefactor of the Sacro Monte, and expressly desired to be buried there. I do not know where the horse was buried. His chapel contains nothing of importance, nor yet does the small oratory with a crucifix in memory of a benefactor, one Giovanni Pschel Alemanno; this is at the top of the ascent and close to the smaller entrance to the Sacro Monte.

At this smaller entrance the visitor will be inclined to enter, but he should not do so if he wishes to take the chapels in the order in which they are numbered. He should continue the broad road until he reaches the excellent inn kept by Signor Topini, and the shops where "*corone*" and pilgrims' beads are sold. The inn and shops are mentioned by Fassola and by Torrotti. Fassola in 1671 says of the inn that it will afford accommodation for people of all ranks, and that though any one with other curiosity may stay in the town, those who would enjoy their devotion quietly and diffusively can

do so more at their ease here. Of the shops he says that they sell "*corone, Storie della Fabrica,*" "and other like instruments of devotion" ("*ed altri instromenti simili di divozione*" p. 80). Torrotti says they sell his book there, with images, and various devout curiosities (*e varie cose curiose di divozione*, p. 66). The shutters are strong and probably the original ones.

At Varese there is a very beautiful lady, one among many others hardly if at all less beautiful on the same mountain, of whom I once asked what people did with these *Corone.* She said, "*Le adoperano per pregare,*" "They make use of them to pray with." She then asked whether the English ever prayed. I said of course they did; that all nations, even the Turks, prayed. "*È Turco lei?*" she said, with a singularly sweet, kind, and beneficent expression. I said I was not, but I do not think she believed me.

Passing now under the handsome arch which forms the main entrance to the sacred precincts we come to

Chapel No. 1. Adam and Eve.

This chapel is perhaps the only one in the case of which Pellegrino Tibaldi's design was

carried out; and even here it has been in many respects modified. The figures are by Tabachetti; and the original internal frescoes were by Domenico Alfani Perugino, but they have perished and have lately been replaced by some pieces from the life of Adam and Eve by Professor Burlazzi of Varallo. The outer frescoes are said by Bordiga to be by Giovanni Miel of Antwerp, but they are probably in reality by one of the brothers Battista and Gio. Mauro Rovere. I will, however, reserve remarks on this subject until I come to the Massacre of the Innocents chapel. The original frescoes do not appear to have been executed till 1594–1600, but the terra-cotta work is described as complete in the 1586 edition of Caccia in terms that leave no doubt but that the present group is intended; it is probably among the first works executed by Tabachetti on the Sacro Monte, but how much earlier it is than 1586 cannot be known till the missing editions of Caccia are found. That he did the Adam and Eve is not doubted. If he also did the animals, he had made great progress by the time he came to the Temptation chapel, for the animals in this last chapel are far finer than those in the Adam and Eve chapel.

The present chapel superseded an earlier

one with the same subject, which was probably on the site now occupied by the Crowning with Thorns, inasmuch as in this chapel the fresco on one wall still represents Adam and Eve being dismissed from Paradise. Signor Arienta pointed this out to me, and I think it sufficiently determines the position of the original Adam and Eve chapel. The evidence for the existence of the earlier chapel throws so much light upon the way in which figures have been shifted about and whole chapels have disappeared, leaving only an incidental trace or two behind them in some other of those now existing, that I shall not hesitate to reproduce it here.

We were told in the town that there had been an old Adam and an old Eve, and that these two figures were now doing duty as Roman soldiers in chapel No. 23, which represents the Capture of Christ. On investigation, we found, against the wall, two figures dressed as Roman soldiers that evidently had something wrong with them. The draperies of all the other figures are painted, either terra-cotta or wood, but with these two they are real, being painted linen or calico, dipped in thin mortar or plaster of Paris, and real drapery always means that the figure has had something done to it. The armour, where armour shows, is

Plate No. II. Face p. 121.

"THE OLD ADAM AND EVE."

not quite of the same pattern as that painted on the other figures, nor is it of the same make; in the case of the remoter figure it does not go down far enough, and leaves a lucid interval of what was evidently once bare stomach, but has now been painted the brightest blue that could be found, so that it does not catch the eye as flesh; a little further examination was enough to make us strongly suspect that the figures had both been originally nude, and in this case the story current in Varallo was probably true.

Then the question arose, which was Adam, and which Eve? The farther figure was the larger and therefore ought to have been Adam, but it had long hair, and looked a good deal more like a woman than the other did. The nearer figure had a beard and moustaches, and was quite unlike a woman; true, we could see no sign of bosom with the farther figure, but neither could we with the nearer. On the whole, therefore, we settled it that the nearer and moustached soldier was Adam, and the more distant long-haired beardless one, Eve. In the evening, however, Cav. Prof. Antonini and several of the other best Varallo authorities were on the Sacro Monte, and had the grating removed so that we could get inside the chapel, which we were not slow to do. The state of

the drapery showed that curiosity had been already rife upon the subject, and, observing this, Jones and I gently lifted as much of it as was necessary, and put the matter for ever beyond future power of question that the farther, long-haired, beardless figure was Adam, and the nearer, moustached one, Eve. They are now looking in the same direction, as joining in the hue and cry against Christ, but were originally turned towards one another; the one offering, and the other taking, the apple.

Tabachetti's Eve, in the Creation or Adam and Eve chapel, is a figure of remarkable beauty, and a very great improvement on her predecessor. The left arm is a restoration by Cav. Prof. Antonini, but no one who was not told of the fact would suspect it. The heads both of the Adam and the Eve have been less successfully repainted than the rest of the figures, and have suffered somewhat in consequence, but the reader will note the freedom from any approach to *barocco* maintained throughout the work. The serpent is exceedingly fine, and the animals are by no means unpleasing. Speaking for myself, I have found the work continually grow upon me during the many years I have known it.

The walls of this, and, indeed, of all the

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Plate III

Face p. 122.

TABACHETTI'S "ADAM AND EVE."

chapels, were once covered with votive pictures recording the *Grazie* with which each several chapel should be credited, but these generally pleasing, though perhaps sometimes superstitious, minor satellites of the larger artistic luminaries have long since disappeared. It is plain that either the chapels are losing their powers of bringing the *Grazie* about, or that we moderns care less about saying "thank you" when we have been helped out of a scrape than our forefathers did. Fassola says :—

"Molti oltre questa non mancano di lasciar qualche insigne memoria, cioè ò li dinari per incominciar, ò finire qualche Capella, ò per qualche pittura ò Statua, ò altro non essendouene pur' vno di questi Benefattori, che non habbino ottenute le grazie desiderate di Dio, e dalla Beata Vergine, del che piene ne sono le carte, le mura delle Capelle, e Chiese con voti d'argento, ed altre infinite Tauolette, antichissime, e moderne, voti di cera ed altro, oltre tanto da esprimersi grazie, che ò per pouertà, ò per mancanza, ò per altri pensieri de' graziati restano celate."

For my own part I am sorry that these humble chronicles of three centuries or so of hairbreadth escapes are gone. Votive pictures have always fascinated me. Everything does go so dreadfully wrong in them, and yet we know it will all be set so perfectly right again directly, and that nobody will be really hurt. Besides, they are so naïve, and free from "high-falutin;"

they give themselves no airs, are not review-puffed, and the people who paint them do not call one another geniuses. They are business-like, direct, and sensible; not unfrequently they acquire considerable historical interest, and every now and then there is one by an old master born out of due time—who probably wist not so much as even that there were old masters. Here, if anywhere, may be found smouldering, but still living, embers of the old art-fire of Italy, and from these, more readily than from the hot-bed atmosphere of the academies, may the flame be yet rekindled. Lastly, if allowed to come as they like, and put themselves where they will, they grow into a pretty, quilt-like, artlessly-arranged decoration, that will beat any mere pattern contrived of set purpose. Some half-dozen or so of the old votive pictures are still preserved in the Museum at Varallo, and are worthy of notice, one or two of them dating from the fifteenth century, and a few late autumn leaves, as it were, of images in wax still hang outside the Crowning with Thorns chapel, but the chapels are, for the most part, now without them. Each chapel was supposed to be beneficial in the case of some particular bodily or mental affliction, and Fassola often winds up his notice

with a list of the Graces which are most especially to be hoped for from devotion at the chapel he is describing; he does not, however, ascribe any especial and particular Grace to the first few chapels. A few *centesimi* and perhaps a *soldo* or two still lie on the floor, thrown through the grating by pilgrims, and the number of these which any chapel can attract may be supposed to be a fair test of its popularity. These *centesimi* are a source of temptation to the small boys of Varallo, who are continually getting into trouble for extracting them by the help of willow wands and birdlime. I understand that when the *centesimi* are picked up by the authorities, some few are always left, on the same principle as that on which we leave a nest egg in a hen's nest for the hen to lay a new one to; a very little will do, but even the boys know that there must be a germ of increment left, and when they stole the coppers from the Ecce Homo chapel not long since, they still left one *centesimo* and a waistcoat button on the floor.

Chapel No. 2. The Annunciation.

This was one of the earliest chapels, and is dated by Fassola as from 1490 to 1500. There is no record of any contemporary fresco back-

ground. Bordiga says that these figures were originally in the chapel now occupied by the Salutation of Mary by Elizabeth, but that having been long objects of popular veneration they were preserved at the time when Tabachetti took this block of buildings in hand. It does not appear from any source what figures were in this chapel before the Annunciation figures were brought here; possibly, as it is supposed to be a reproduction of the Santa Casa di Loreto, this was considered enough and it was untenanted. Bordiga says, "The faces and extremities have a divine expression and are ancient," but both Fassola and Torrotti say that Tabachetti gave the figures new heads. These last are probably right; the Virgin has real drapery, which, as I have said, always means that the figure has been cut about.

Whatever the change was, it had been effected before the publication of the 1586 edition of Caccia, where the chapel is described, in immediate sequence to the Adam and Eve chapel, and in the following terms:—

"Si vede poi un poco discosto, un altro Tempio, fatto ad imitatione della Cappella di Loreto, ben adornato, dove è l'Angelo che annontia l' incarnatione . . . . di relievo."

In the poetical part of the same book the figures are very warmly praised, as, indeed, they

deserve to be. Fassola and Torrotti both say that the Virgin was a very favourite figure—so much so that pilgrims had loaded her with jewels. One night, a thief tried to draw a valuable ring from her finger, when she dealt him a stunning box on the ear that stretched him senseless until he was apprehended and punished. Fassola says of the affair:—

"Frà gl' altri è degna di racconto la mortificazione hauuta da vn peruerso, che fatto ardito, non sò da quale spirito diabolico, volendo rubbare alcune di dette gioie, e forsi tutte, dalle mani della Beata Vergine fù reso immobile da vna guanciata della Vergine fin' à tanto, che la giustizia l' hebbe nella sua braccia; contempli ogn' vno questa Statua, che ne riporterà mosso il cuore."

Under the circumstances I should say he had better contemplate her at a respectful distance. I can believe that the thief was very much mortified, but the Virgin seems to have been a good deal mortified too, for I suspect her new head was after this occurrence and not before it.

Such miracles are still of occasional if not frequent occurrence in connection with the Sacro Monte. I have a broadside printed at Milan in 1882 in which a full account is given of a recent miracle worked by the Blessed Virgin of the Sacro Monte of Varallo. It is

about a young man who had been miraculously cured of a lingering illness that had baffled the skill of all the most eminent professors; so his father sent him with a lamp of gold and a large sum of money which he was to offer to the Madonna. As he was on his way he felt tired [it must be remembered that the railway was not opened till 1886], so he sat down under a tree and began to amuse himself by counting the treasure. Hardly had he begun to count when he was attacked by four desperate assassins, who with pistols and poignards did their very utmost to despoil him, but it was not the smallest use. One of the assassins was killed, and the others were so cowed that they promised, if he would only fetch them some "devotions" from the Sacro Monte, to abandon their evil courses and thenceforth lead virtuous lives.

We do not pitch our tracts quite so strongly, but need give ourselves no airs in this matter.

Chapel No. 3. The Salutation of Mary by Elizabeth.

The walls of this chapel according to Fassola are old, but the figures all new. Both Fassola and Torrotti say that Tabachetti had just begun to work on this chapel when he lost his

reason, but as the work is described as complete in the 1586 edition of Caccia, it is evident, as I have already shown, that his insanity was only temporary, inasmuch as he did another chapel after 1590. Both writers are very brief in their statement of the fact, Fassola only saying "*quando era diuenuto pazzo,*" and Torrotti "*impazzitosi.*" The fresco background is meagre and forms no integral part of the design; this does not go for much, but suggests that in the original state of the chapel, which we know was an early one, there may have been but little background, the fresco background not having yet attained its full development. The figures would doubtless look better than they do if they had not been loaded with many coats of shiny paint, which has clogged some of the modelling; they are not very remarkable, but improve upon examination, and it must be remembered that the subject is one of exceeding difficulty.

Chapel No. 4. First Vision of St. Joseph.

Fassola and Torrotti say that this chapel was originally a servant's lodge ("ospizio delli serui della Fabrica"), and part of the building is still used as a store-room. The servants were subsequently shifted to what was then the

chapel of the Capture of Christ, the figures in that chapel being moved to the one in which they are now. The original Capture chapel was on the ground floor of the large house that stands on the right hand as one enters the small entrance to the Sacro Monte which a visitor will be tempted to take, opposite Giovanni Pschel's chapel, and a little below the Temptation chapel.

The First Vision of St. Joseph is not mentioned in either the 1586 or 1590 editions of Caccia; we may therefore be certain that it did not exist, and may also be sure that it was Tabachetti's last work upon the Sacro Monte —for that it is by him has never been disputed. It should probably be dated early in 1591, by which time Tabachetti must have recovered his reason and was on the point of leaving Varallo for ever. I give a photograph of the very beautiful figure of St. Joseph, which must rank among the finest on the Sacro Monte. I grant that a sleeping figure is the easiest of all subjects, except a dead one, inasmuch as Nature does not here play against the artist with loaded dice, by being able to give the immediate change of position which the artist cannot. With sleep and death there is no change required, so that the hardest sleeping figure is

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Plate IV

Face p. 130.

"FIRST VISION OF ST. JOSEPH."

By Tabachetti.

easier than the easiest waking one; moreover, sleep is so touching and beautiful that it is one of the most taking of all subjects; nevertheless there are sleeping figures and sleeping figures, and the St. Joseph in the chapel we are considering is greatly better than the second sleeping St. Joseph in chapel No. 9, by whomsoever this figure may be—or than the sleeping Apostles by D'Enrico in chapel No. 22.

Cusa says that the Madonna is taken from a small figure modelled by Gaudenzio still existing at Valduggia in the possession of the Rivaroli family. She is a very pretty and graceful figure, and is sewing on a pillow in the middle of the composition—of course unmoved by the presence of the angel, who is only visible to her husband. The angel is also a remarkably fine figure.

CHAPTER X.

THE SEVEN CHAPELS NUMBERED 5–11.

CHAPEL No. 5. VISIT OF THE MAGI.

FASSOLA says that this chapel was begun about the year 1500, and completed about 1520, at the expense of certain wealthy Milanese; Torrotti repeats this. Bordiga gives it a later date, making Gaudenzio begin to work in it in 1531; he supposes that Gaudenzio left Varallo suddenly in that year to undertake work for the church of St. Cristoforo at Vercelli without quite completing the Magi frescoes; and it is indeed true that the frescoes appear to be unfinished, some parts at first sight seeming only sketched in outline, as though the work had been interrupted; but Colombo, whose industry is only equalled by his fine instinct and good sense, refers both the frescoes and their interruption to a later date. Still, Fassola may have only intended, and indeed probably did intend, that the shell of the building was completed by 1520, the figures and frescoes being

deferred for want of funds, though the building was ready for occupation.

Colombo, on page 115 of his "Life and Work of Gaudenzio Ferrari," says that Bordiga remarked the obvious difference in style between the frescoes in the Magi and the Crucifixion chapels, which he held to have been completed in 1524, but nevertheless thought seven years the utmost that passed between the two works. Colombo shows that by 1528 Gaudenzio was already established at Vercelli, and ascribes the frescoes in the Magi chapel to a date some time between 1536 and 1539, during which time he believes that Gaudenzio returned to Varallo, finding no trace of him elsewhere. The internal evidence in support of this opinion is strong, for the Crucifixion chapel is not a greater advance upon the frescoes in the church of St. Maria delle Grazie, painted in 1513, magnificent as these last are, than the Magi frescoes are upon the Crucifixion, and an interval of ten years or so is not too much to allow between the two. Gaudenzio Ferrari was like Giovanni Bellini, a slow but steady grower from first to last; with no two painters can we be more sure that as long as they lived they were taking pains, and going on from good to better; nevertheless, it takes

many years before so wide a difference can be brought about, as that between the frescoes in the Magi and Crucifixion chapels. The Magi frescoes have, however, unfortunately suffered from damp much more than the Crucifixion ones, and I should say they had been a good deal retouched, but by a very capable artist.

Colombo thinks that in these frescoes Gaudenzio was assisted by his son Gerolamo, who died in 1539, and, as I have said, holds that it was the death of this son which made him leave Varallo, without even finishing the frescoes on which he was engaged.

But Signor Arienta assures me that the frescoes were not in reality left incomplete: he holds that the wall on the parts where the outline shows was too dry when the colour was laid on, and that it has gradually gone, leaving the outline only. This, he tells me, not unfrequently happens, and has occurred in one or two places even in the Crucifixion chapel, where an arm here and there appears unfinished. The parts in the Magi chapel that show the outline only are not likely to have been left to the last; they come in a very random haphazard way, and I have little hesitation in accepting Signor Arienta's opinion. If, however, this is wrong and the work was really unfinished, I

should ascribe this fact to the violent dissensions that broke out in 1538, and should incline towards using it as an argument for assigning this date to the frescoes themselves, more especially as it fits in with whatever other meagre evidence we have.

Something went wrong with the funds destined for the erection of this chapel, and this may account for the length of time taken to erect the chapel itself, as well as for subsequent delay in painting it and filling it with statues. In the earlier half of his work Fassola says that certain Milanese gentlemen, "*Signori della Castellanza*," subscribed two hundred gold scudi with which to found the chapel, but that the money was in part diverted to other uses—"a matter," he says, "about which I am compelled to silence by a passage in my preface;" this passage is the expression of a desire to avoid giving offence; but Fassola says the interception of the funds involved the chapel's "remaining incomplete for some time." There seems, in fact, to have been some serious scandal in connection with the money, about which, even after 150 years, Fassola was unwilling to speak.

I would ask the reader to note in passing that in this work, high up on the spectator's

right, Gaudenzio has painted some rocks with a truth which was in his time rare. In the earliest painting, rocks seem to have been considered hopeless, and were represented by a something like a mould for a jelly or blanc-mange; yet rocks on a grey day are steady sitters, and one would have thought the early masters would have found them among the first things that they could do, whereas on the contrary they were about the last to be rendered with truth and freedom by the greatest painters. This was probably because rocks bored them; they thought they could do them at any time, and were more interested with the figures, draperies, and action. Leonardo da Vinci's rocks, for example, are of no use to any one, nor yet for the matter of that is any part of his landscape—what little there is of it. Holbein's strong hand falls nerveless before a rock or mountain side, and even Marco Basaiti, whose landscape has hardly been surpassed by Giovanni Bellini himself, could not treat a rock as he treated other natural objects. As for Giovanni Bellini, I do not at this moment remember to have seen him ever attempt a bit of slate, or hard grey gritty sandstone rock. This is not so with Gaudenzio, his rocks in the Magi chapel, and again in the Pietà compart-

ment of his fresco in the church of St. Maria delle Grazie, at the foot of the mountain, are as good as rocks need ever be. The earliest really good rocks I know are in the small entombment by Roger Van der Weyden in our own National Gallery.

Returning to the terra-cotta figures in the Magi chapel, there is nothing about them to find fault with, but they do not arouse the same enthusiasm as the frescoes. They too are sufferers by damp and lapse of time, and a painted terra-cotta figure does not lend itself to a dignified decay. The *disjecti membra poetæ* are hard to recognise if painted terra-cotta is the medium through which inspiration has been communicated to the outer world. Outside the Magi chapel, invisible by the Magi, and under a small glazed lantern which lights the St. Joseph with the Virgin adoring the Infant Saviour, and the Presepio, hangs the star. It is very pretty where it is, but its absence from the chapel itself is, I think, on the whole, regrettable. I have been sometimes tempted to think that it originally hung on the wall by a hook which still remains near the door through which the figures must pass, but think it more probable that this hook was used to fasten the string of a curtain that was hung over the window.

In conclusion, I should say that Colombo says that the figures being short of the prescribed number were completed by Fermo Stella. Bordiga gives the horses only to this artist.

Chapel No. 6. Il Presepio.

This is more a grotto than a chapel, and is declared in an inscription set up by Bernardino Caimi in letters of gold to be "the exact counterpart of the one at Bethlehem in which the Virgin gave birth to her Divine Son." Bordiga writes of this inscription as still visible, but I have repeatedly looked for it without success.

If Caimi, as Fassola distinctly says, had the above inscription set up, it is plain that this, and perhaps the Shepherd's chapel hard by, were among the very earliest chapels undertaken. This is rendered probable by the statement of Fassola that the shell of the Circumcision chapel which adjoins the ones we are now considering was built "*dalli principij del Sacro Monte.*" He says that this fact is known by the testimony of certain contemporaneous painters ("*il che s' argumenta dalli Pittori che furono di que' tempi*"). Clearly, then, the Presepio, Shepherds, and Circumcision chapels were in existence some years before the Magi

chapel was begun. Gaudenzio was too young to have done the figures before Bernardino died. Originally, doubtless, the grotto was shown without figures, which were added by Gaudenzio, later on; they were probably among his first works. The place is so dark that they cannot be well seen, but about noon the sun comes down a narrow staircase and they can be made out very well for a quarter of an hour or so; they are then seen to be very good. They have no fresco background, nor yet is there any to the Shepherd's chapel, which confirms me in thinking these to have been among the earliest works undertaken. Colombo says that the infant Christ in the Presepio is not by Gaudenzio, the original figure having been stolen by some foreigner not many years ago, and Battista, the excellent Custode of the Sacro Monte, assures me that this was the second time the infant had been stolen.

Chapel No. 7. Visit of the Shepherds.

Some of the figures—the Virgin, one shepherd, and four little angels—in this chapel are believed to be by Gaudenzio, and if they are, they are probably among his first essays, but they are lighted from above, and the spectator looks down on them, so that the dust shows,

and they can hardly be fairly judged. The hindmost shepherd—the one with his hand to his heart and looking up, is the finest figure; the Virgin herself is also very good, but she wants washing.

If Fassola and Torrotti are to be believed,* and I am afraid I must own that, much as I like them, I find them a little credulous, the Virgin in this chapel is more remarkable than she appears at first sight; she used originally to have her face turned in admiration towards the infant Christ, but at the very first moment that she heard the bells begin to ring for the elevation of Pope Innocent the Tenth to the popedom, she turned round to the pilgrims visiting the place, in token of approbation; the authorities, not knowing what to make of such behaviour, had her set right, but she turned round a second time with a most gracious smile and assumed the position which the elevation

* Their words run thus;—"Il volto di quella Vergine Maria mirava altre volte al Bambino Giesù, mà dall' anno, il giorno, ed hora, che fù creato Pontefice Innocenzo X. al suono di Campane miracolosamente si voltò alli Visitanti. Dicono alcuni, che prima ancora staua riuoltata al Popolo, e che accommodata, non accorgendosi del miracolo in detto giorno, poi lo diede a conoscere." Fassola, p. 86.

"Si dice che la Vergine mirava il Bambino, e quando si sonarono le campane per l'esaltazione d'Innocenzio X. tornò il volto ai Visitanti, che racconciata nuovamente voltollo al popolo come invitante." Torrotti, p. 70.

of no later Pope has been ever able to disturb. Pope Innocent X. was not exactly the kind of Pope whom one would have expected the Virgin to greet with such extraordinary condescension. If it had been the present amiable and venerable Pontiff there would have been less to wonder at.

Chapel No. 8. Called by Fassola and Torrotti the Circumcision, and by Bordiga the Purification.

The chapel itself is, as I have already said, one of the very oldest on the Sacro Monte; it is doubtless much older than either the frescoes or the terra-cotta figures which it contains, both of which are given by Fassola, Torrotti, and Bordiga to Fermo Stella, but I cannot think they are right in either case. The frescoes remind me more of Lanini, and are much too modern for Fermo Stella; they are, however, in but poor preservation, and no very definite opinion can be formed concerning them. The terra-cotta work is, I think, also too free for Fermo Stella. The infant Jesus is very pretty, and the Virgin would also be a fine figure if she was not spoiled by the wig and over-much paint which restorers have doubtless got to answer for. The work is mentioned in the

1586 edition of Caccia as completed, but there is nothing to show whether or no it was a restoration. I have long thought I detected a certain sub-Flemish feeling in both the Virgin and Child, and though aware that I have very little grounds for doing so, am half inclined to think that Tabachetti must have had something to do with them. Bordiga is clearly wrong in calling the chapel a Purification. There are no doves, and there must always be doves for a Purification. Besides, there was till lately a knife ready for use lying on the table, as shown in Guidetti's illustration of the chapel.

Chapel No. 9. Joseph Warned to Fly.

This chapel is described as completed in both the 1586 and 1590 editions of Caccia. The figures are again given to Fermo Stella by Bordiga, but not by either Fassola or Torrotti. I am again unable to think that Bordiga is right. There is again, also, a sub-Flemish feeling which is difficult to account for. The angel is a fine figure, and the heads of the Virgin and Child are also excellent, but the folds of the drapery are not so good. If there were any evidence, which there is not, to show that these figures were early works of

Tabachetti, and that the sleeping St. Joseph is a first attempt at the figure which he succeeded later so admirably in rendering, I should be inclined to accept it; as it is, I can form no opinion about the authorship of the terra-cotta work. The fresco background is worthless.

Chapel No. 10. The Flight into Egypt.

This chapel is of no great interest. The authors and the date are uncertain. It is mentioned in the 1586 and 1590 editions of Caccia, but we may be tolerably sure that Tabachetti had nothing to do with it. Bordiga says "the figures seem to be by Stella," which may be right or may be wrong. Though the figures are not very good, yet this chapel has, or had in Fassola's time, other merits perhaps even of greater than artistic value, for he says it is particularly useful to those who have lost anything. "*Perditori di qualche cosa*" are more especial recipients of grace in consequence of devotion at this particular chapel. The flight is conducted as leisurely as flights into Egypt invariably are, but has with it a something, I know not what—perhaps it is the donkey—which always reminds me of Hampstead Heath on a bank holiday.

Chapel No. 11. Massacre of the Innocents.

This is one of the most remarkable chapels on the Sacro Monte, and also one of the most abounding in difficult problems. It was built with funds provided by Carlo Emanuele I., Duke of Savoy, about the year 1586, and took four years to complete. In the 1586–7 edition of Caccia the chapel itself is alone given as completed. In the 1590–1 edition, it is said that both the sculptures and the frescoes were now finished, and that they are all "*bellissime e ben fatti* (*sic*)." This is confirmed by an inscription on the collar of a soldier who stands near Herod's right hand, and which, I do not doubt, is intended to govern the whole of the terra-cotta work. The inscription runs—

"Michel Ang. RSTI" (Rossetti) "Scul: Da Claino MDXC Etate an. VIIL"

This exactly tallies with the dates given in the two editions of Caccia.

The date is thus satisfactorily established, but the authorship of the work is less easily settled. All the authorities without exception say that the sculptor was a certain Giacomo Bargnola of Valsolda, who was also called

Plate No. V.

Face p. 144.

"MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS."

Bologna. Fassola describes him as a "*statuario virtuosissimo e glorioso per tutta l' Europa,*" and Torrotti calls him "*il famoso Giacomo Bargnola di Valsoldo* [sic] *sopranominato Bologna.*" All subsequent writers have repeated this.

At Varallo itself I found nothing known about either Bargnola or Valsolda, but turning to Zani find Bargnola under the name Paracca. Zani says, "*Paracca, non Peracca, nè Perracca, nè Perrazza, Giannantonio, o Giacomo, detto il Valsoldo, Valsolino, e il Valsoldino, non Valfondino, ed anche il Bargnola, e malamente Antonio Valsado Parravalda.*" He says that he was a "*plastico*" and restorer of statues, came from the neighbourhood of Como, was "*bravissimo,*" and lived about from 1557–1587. There was a Luigi Paracca from the same place who was also called "Il Valsoldino," and a Giacomo, and an Andrea, but of these last three he does not say that they were noteworthy.

Nagler mentions only a Giovanni Antonio Parracca, who he says was called Valsolda. He says that he was a sculptor of Milan, who made a reputation at Rome about 1580 as a restorer of antique statues; that he only worked in order to get money to spend on debauchery,

and died, according to Baglione, young, and in a hospital. His words are—

"Paracca, Gio. Antonio gennant Valsoldo, Bildhauer von Mailand, machte sich um 1580 in Rom als Restaurator antiker Werke einen Namen, arbeitete aber nur, um Geld zur Schwelgerei zu bekommen. Starb jung im Hospital wie Baglione versichert."

I have had Baglione before me, but can find no life of Paracca either under that name or under that of Bargnola, and suppose the reference to him must be incidental in the life of some other artist. I will again gratefully accept a fuller reference. I do not believe a word about Paracca's alleged debauchery. Who ever yet worked as Nagler says?

We have, then, to face on the one hand the authority of all writers about the Sacro Monte, and on the other, the exceedingly explicit claim made by Rossetti himself in the inscription given above. Probably Bargnola began the work and Rossetti finished it. It is not likely that the extremely circumstantial statement of Fassola should be without any foundation, but again it is not likely that Rossetti would have claimed the work if he had not done at any rate the greater part of it. If Bargnola died about 1587, he could not have done much, for in the 1586-1587 edition of Caccia it is ex-

pressly stated that the chapel alone was done "*Di questa è fatta solamente la chiesa.*" And if he had lived to finish the work, he, and not Rossetti, would have signed it. We may conclude, then, with some certainty, that he died before the chapel was finished, but may think it nevertheless probable that he was originally commissioned to do it.

The question resolves itself, therefore, into how much he did, and how soon Rossetti took the work over. It must be remembered that Michael Angelo Rossetti is a name absolutely unknown to us. Zani, Nagler, Cicognara, Lübke, Perkins, and all the authorities I have consulted omit to mention him. I find abundant reference to three, and indeed five, painters who were called Rossetti, two of whom—doubtless nephews of Michael Angelo Rossetti,—did the frescoes in this very chapel we are considering, but no one says one syllable about any Michael Angelo Rossetti, and it is a bold thing to suppose that an unknown man should have succeeded so admirably with such a very important work as the Massacre of the Innocents chapel, and have lived as the inscription shows to the age at least of fifty-seven without leaving a single trace in any other quarter whatever. The work, at any rate in many parts, is that of

one who has been working in clay all his life, and was a thorough master of his craft, and this makes it all the more difficult to suppose it to be a single *tour de force.* On the other hand, such *tours de force* were not uncommon among medieval Italian workmen. Gaudenzio Ferrari's work in sculpture is little else than a succession of *tours de force*, and in other parts of the work we are now considering, there is a certain archaism which suggests growing rather than matured power.

We should not forget, however, that an inscription in terra-cotta cannot be surreptitiously scrawled on like a false signature on a fresco or painting. Here the signature was made with pomp and circumstance while the clay was still wet, and was baked with the figure on which it appears. Too many people in this case would have to know about it for a false inscription to be probable. As for the evidence of Fassola, we must bear in mind that he is a notoriously inaccurate writer; that he did not write till nearly a hundred years after the work was completed; that Torrotti is only an echo of Fassola, and all subsequent writers little more than echoes of Fassola and Torrotti. On the whole, therefore, the more I have considered the matter the more I incline towards accepting

the signature, and giving the greater part of the terra-cotta work to the man who claims it—that is to say, to Michael Angelo Rossetti, sculptor, of Claino. Signor Arienta tells me he has found a Castel Claino mentioned in an old document, as formerly existing near Milan. He is himself inclined (though knowing nothing of Paracca when I last saw him), to see two hands in the work—and here he is probably right, but I hardly think Rossetti would have signed as he did if Bargnola or Paracca had done the greater part or even half of it.

Proceeding to a consideration of the frescoes, we find that two of Herod's body-guard, standing on his left hand, and corresponding to the one on his right, on whose collar the sculptor signed his name, have also signatures on their collars, obviously done in concert with the sculptor. The signatures are as follows :—

"Battista Roveri Pictor Milane Æta xxxv"

and

"Io Mauro Rover Pictor."

Fassola says that the painter of the chapel was "il Fiamenghino." If he had said the painters were "i Fiamenghini" he would have been right, for Signor Arienta called my attention to a passage in Lanzi, in which he has

dealt with three painters bearing the name of Rovere, two of whom, if not all three, were called "i Fiamenghini." The three were Giovanni Mauro, Giambattista, and Marco, which last painter does not seem to have had anything to do with the Massacre of the Innocents. Lanzi calls Gio. Mauro a follower, first of Camillo, and then of Giulio Cesare Procaccini. He describes them as painters of great facility and invention, but as seldom taking pains to do what they very well might have done, if they had chosen, and his verdict is, I should say, about right. He adds :—

"I find them also called Rossetti, and they are still more often described as '*i Fiamenghini*,' their father, Richard, having come from Flanders, and settled in Milan."

Signor Arienta explained to me that it was through this surname of Fiamenghini, by which the brothers Rovere were known, that Giovanni Miel D'Anvers was supposed to have had any hand in the frescoes on the Sacro Monte. This last-named painter was court painter to Carlo Emanuelle I. Bordiga knew this, and seeing he came from Antwerp, concluded that he must be "il Fiamenghino" mentioned, and all subsequent writers have followed him.

Signor Arienta also tells me that some twenty

years or so later these same two painters signed some frescoes at Orta as follows :—

"Io Battista, et Io Maurus Aruberius, dicti Fiamenghini, pinxerunt anno 1608 die 9 Octobris."

Doubtless their mother's name was Rossetti, and the Michael Angelo RSTI who claims the sculptured work, and was some twenty years their senior, was their uncle.

He also told me that one of the figures in the frescoes of the Massacre of the Innocents chapel is wearing a collar with a clasp on which there is an oak-tree, for which "Rovere" is the Italian, and that he holds this to have been a portrait of the painter.

Fassola says that under the glazed aperture which is in front of the piece there is placed a small terra-cotta car drawn by a child and loaded with a head, or ear, of maize, a goose, and a clown ; he explains that the maize means 1000, the car 400, the clown 90, and the goose "*per il suo verso*"—whatever this may mean—4, which numbers taken together make the number of infants that were killed. He adds that there is another like hieroglyphic, which, as it is not very important, he will pass over. I find no mention of this in Torrotti, nor yet in Bordiga, but when people call attention to a

thing and then say nothing about it, I generally find they have a reason. On a recent visit to Varallo I examined the two hieroglyphs; the second is also a small terra-cotta car or cart drawn by a child, and containing the bust of a monk, a die, and two or three other things that I could not make out. The treatment of these two hieroglyphics alone is enough to show that they were done by a thorough master of his craft. No doubt the import of the whole was known by Fassola to be sinister, but I must leave its interpretation to others. He adds that the graces vouchsafed at this chapel are chiefly on behalf of sick children.

I may conclude by saying that though nothing has been taken directly from Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary chapel, the sculptor, whoever he was, has nevertheless plainly felt the influence, and been animated by the spirit of that great work, then just completed.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPELS No. 12—No. 22.

We now begin the series of chapels that deal with Christ's Manhood, Ministry, and Passion. The first of these is

Chapel No. 12. The Baptism of Christ by John.

The statues are of no great interest, and of unknown authorship. The frescoes are by Orazio Gallinone di Treviglio, but they are not striking. The date of the chapel is about 1585. It is mentioned in the 1586 edition of Caccia, and it is added that the water of the fountain would be brought there shortly so as to imitate the Jordan. This was done, but the water made the chapel so damp that it was turned off again. The graces, according to Fassola, are chiefly for married ladies.

Chapel No. 13. Temptation.

This chapel is given as completed in the 1586 edition of Caccia, and had probably been by this time reconstructed by Tabachetti, to whom the work is universally and no doubt justly ascribed.

That the figures of Christ and of the devil have both been cut about may be conjectured from their draperies being in part real linen or calico, and not terra-cotta; Christ's red shirt front is real, as also is a great part of the devil's dress. This last personage is a most respectable-looking patriarchal old Jewish Rabbi. I should say he was the leading solicitor in some such town as Samaria, and that he gave an annual tea to the choir. He is offering Christ some stones just as any other respectable person might do, and if it were not for his formidable two clawed feet there would be nothing to betray his real nature. The beasts with their young are excellent. The porcupine has real quills. The fresco background is by Melchior D'Enrico, and here the fall of the devil when the whole is over is treated with a realistic unreserve little likely to be repeated. He is dreadfully unwell. The graces in this

Plate No. VI. Face p. 154.

THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS."

chapel are more especially for those tempted by the world, the flesh, and the devil, for people who are bewitched, and for those who are in any wise troubled in mind, body, and estate, "as the varying views of the pilgrims themselves will best determine."

Bordiga says that the chapel was begun about 1580, and completed in 1594, but he refers probably to Tabachetti's reconstruction, for in the portico there is an inscription painted by order of the Bishop, and forbidding visitors to deface the walls, that is dated 1524, and the back of the chapel has many early 16th century scratches.

Chapel No. 14. The Woman of Samaria.

This chapel is given as completed in the 1586 edition of Caccia, so that Bordiga and Cusa are wrong in dating it 1598. In the poetical part of Caccia it is described as recently made and "*ben ritratto.*" The woman of Samaria is a fine buxom figure, but the paint has peeled off so badly both from her and from the Christ that it is hardly fair to judge the work at all. I should think it was very possibly an early work by Tabachetti, but should be sorry to hazard a decided opinion. The

frescoes are without interest. The graces at this chapel were chiefly for women who wanted to abandon some evil practice, and for rain when the country was suffering from long drought. This last is because Christ said to the woman of Samaria "Give me to drink."

Chapel No. 15. The Paralytic.

The chapel alone was completed by 1586 and 1590, so that we may be certain Tabachetti had no hand in it. The statues are said to be by D'Enrico, whom we meet here for the first time. Bordiga praises them very highly, but neither Jones nor I liked the composition as much as we should have wished to have done. Some of the individual figures are good, especially a man with his arm in a sling, and two men conversing on the left of the composition, but there is too little concerted and united action, and too much attempt to show off every figure to the best advantage, to the sacrifice of more important considerations. They probably date from 1620–1624, in which last year Bordiga says that the frescoes were completed. These are chiefly, if not entirely, by Cristoforo Martinolo, a Valsesian artist and pupil of Morazzone, who, according to Bordiga,

though little known, has here shown himself no common artist. Again neither Jones nor I admired them as much as we should have been glad to do. "All infirmities of fever, and paralysis," says Fassola, "if recommended to the Great Saviour at this place will be dissipated, as may be gathered from the many *voti* here exhibited."

Chapel No. 16. The Widow's Son at Nain.

Of this chapel the walls are alone mentioned as completed in 1590. So that Bordiga and Cusa are again wrong in saying that the frescoes were painted about 1580. It is not good. The walls were probably raised soon after 1580. Donna Mathilde di Savoia, Marchesa di Pianezza, a natural daughter of Carlo Emmanuele I., was among the principal contributors. The graces were "for those who had had bad falls or any accidents whereby they had been rendered speechless, stupid, senseless, and apparently dead."

It will be observed on referring to the plan facing p. 68, that this chapel is given as on the ground now occupied by Christ taken before Annas, and faces the Herod chapel on the

Piazza dei Tribunali. This may be a mere error in the plan, but the plan is generally accurate, and it is very likely that a change was made in the middle of the last century when the Annas chapel was built.

Chapel No. 17. The Transfiguration.

This is on the highest ground of the Sacro Monte, the Transfiguration being supposed to have happened on Mount Sinai. Inside the chapel they have made Mount Sinai, but Fassola says that it was originally quite too high, and the Fabbricieri had ordered it to be made lower, "so as to render it more enjoyable by the eye." It was begun at the end of the sixteenth century, but is mentioned as being only "founded" in the 1586 and 1590 editions of Caccia, and the work seems to have got little further than the foundations, until in 1660 it was resumed; Fassola, writing in 1671, says that the chapel was "*levata in alto da terra l'anno del mille, sei cento e sessanta,*" or about ten years before his book appeared; it was still in great part unpainted, and he makes an appeal to his readers to contribute towards its completion. From both Fassola and Torrotti it would appear that only the group of figures

on the mountain was in existence when they wrote. They both of them make the extraordinary statement that these figures are by Giovanni D'Enrico, whom they must have perfectly well known to have been dead more than a quarter of a century before Fassola wrote, and many years before the figures could possibly have been placed where they now are. It is much as though I, writing now, were to ascribe Boehm's statue of Mr. Darwin, in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, to Chantrey. The figures on the mountain are among the worst on the Sacro Monte. I see that Cusa ascribes the figures of Peter, James, and John only to D'Enrico, but the ascription is very difficult to understand.

Bordiga does not say who did the figures of Peter, James, and John, but he gives the Christ, Moses, and Elias to Pietro Francesco Petera of Varallo. The fourteen figures at the foot of the mountain he assigns to Gaudenzio Soldo of Camasco, a pupil of the sculptor Dionigi Bussola. In 1665 Giuseppe and Stefano Danedi, called Montalti, and pupils of Morazzone, "painted the cupola of the chapel with innumerable angels great and small exhibiting the most varied movements." Giuseppe had the greater share in this work, in which may be seen,

according to Bordiga, signs of the influence of Guido, under whom Giuseppe had studied.

Among the figures below the mountain there is a blind man, and a boy with a bad foot leading him—both good—and a contemptuous father telling the Apostles that they cannot cure his son, and that he had told them so from the first, but the paint is peeling off the figures so much that the work can hardly be judged fairly. When photographed they look much better, and Signor Pizetta tells me he was last year commissioned to photograph the boy, who is in a fit of hystero-epilepsy, for a medical work that was being published in France, so it is probably very true to nature.

Chapel No. 18. Raising of Lazarus.

Fassola says that this chapel was erected at the expense of Pomponio Bosso, a noble Milanese, between the years 1560 and 1580. It is mentioned as finished in the 1586 edition of Caccia, and was probably completed before Tabachetti came. Bordiga only says that it was finished in 1582. The statues are of little or no merit, nor yet the frescoes. I observe that in Caccia the "tempio" is praised but not apparently the work that it contained. The

terra-cotta figures are ascribed by Bordiga to Ravello, and the frescoes to Testa, whose brother, Lorenzo Testa, was Fabbriciere at the time the chapel was erected. There is one rather nice little man in the left-hand corner, but there is nothing else.

Chapel No. 19. Entry into Jerusalem.

The figures in this chapel are ascribed to Giovanni D'Enrico by both Fassola and Torrotti, an ascription very properly set aside by Bordiga, without assigned reason, but probably because 1590 is considerably too early for Giovanni D'Enrico, and there is a document dated May 23, 1590, showing that the fresco background was then contracted for. The sculptured figures are mentioned as finished in the 1586 edition of Caccia, so that D'Enrico could not have done them. They are better than those in the preceding chapels, but they do not arouse enthusiasm, and have suffered so much from decay, and from repainting, that it is hardly fair to form any opinion about them. They probably looked much better when new. The landscape part of the background is by one of the brothers Rovere, named, as I have said, Fiamenghini, and he has introduced a house

with a stepped gable like those at Antwerp. Some of the figures in the background appear to be by the painter Testa, who is named in the document above referred to.

Chapel No 20. The Last Supper.

This was one of the earliest chapels, and is mentioned as completed in the 1586 edition of Caccia. The figures are of wood, stiff, and lifeless, the supper is profuse and of much later date than the figures, but the whole scene is among the least successful on the Sacro Monte. Originally, but not till many years after the figures had been made and placed, Lanini painted a fresco background for this chapel. Perhaps Gaudenzio brought him from Vercelli on the occasion of the temporary return to Varallo supposed by Colombo to have taken place between 1536 and 1539. If we could know when Lanini was on the Sacro Monte doing this background, we might suspect that Gaudenzio was not far off. Lanini's work has unfortunately perished in a second reconstruction of the chapel. Torrotti in 1686 says that a reconstruction of the Cena chapel was then contemplated, but that Lanini's frescoes were not to be touched. The original Cena chapel

may or may not have been on its present site, but the first restoration certainly was so, as appears from the plan dated 1671 already given. The apostles have real napkins round their shoulders. The graces are for people who feel themselves deficient in faith, and intercession may be made here for obstinate sinners.

Chapel No. 21. The Agony in the Garden.

This chapel, again, has been reconstructed, but the old figures have not been preserved as in the case of the Cena, nor yet has the original site. The original site, according to Bordiga, was apart from the other chapels at the foot of the neighbouring *monticello*, meaning, presumably, the height on which the Transfiguration chapel now stands. It was at this old chapel that S. Carlo used to spend hours in prayer. It was one of the earliest, and the figures were of wood. Fassola says that it was the angel who was offering the cup to Christ in the old chapel who announced his approaching end to S. Carlo, but the figures had been removed in his time as they were perishing, and the terra-cotta ones by Giovanni D'Enrico had been substituted, with a fresco

background by his brother Melchiorre. These in their turn perished during a reconstruction some twenty years or so ago. The graces at this chapel are thus described by Fassola.

"Il moderno e Christo ed Angiolo nel medemo stato rinouati non sono meno miraculosi, perche tutti li concorrenti, bisognosi di pazienza di soffrire trauagli, malattie, ed ogni sorte d' infermità tanto dell' anima, quanto del corpo caldamente racomandandosi al piacere di questo sudante Christo riportano ciò che meglio per lo stato di questo, ed altro Mondo fà di necessità alle loro persone."

I find no mention of any original fresco background, though I do of the one added afterwards by Melchiorre D'Enrico, now no longer in existence. As this was one of the earliest chapels, I incline to think that there was no fresco background in the first instance.

Chapel No. 22. The Sleeping Apostles.

Fassola says that this chapel was decorated about fifty years (really fifty-nine) before the date at which he was writing, by Melchiorre D'Enrico. It was then on its present site, but the end of the Cena block was rebuilt some twenty years ago. The present Custode, Battista, tells me he worked at the rebuilding, and taking me upstairs showed me a trace or

two of Melchiorre's background. The sleeping Apostles are said to be by Giovanni D'Enrico; they will not bear comparison with Tabachetti's St. Joseph. The benefactor was Count Pio Giacomo Fassola di Rassa, a collateral ancestor of the historian. People who have become lethargic in their self-indulgence, or who are blinded through some bad habit, will find relief at this chapel. I have met with nothing to show that there was any earlier chapel with the same subject, and in the 1586 edition of Caccia it is expressly mentioned as one of those that as yet were merely contemplated, though the Agony in the Garden itself is described as completed.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PALACE OF PILATE.

We now come to the block of several chapels comprised in a building originally designed by Pellegrini at the instance of S. Carlo Borromeo, but not carried out according to his design, and called "The Palace of Pilate." This work was begun about 1590, and according to Fassola was not completed till 1660. The figures, however, must have been most of them placed by 1644, for they are mainly by Giovanni D'Enrico, who is believed to have died in that year. The first of these chapels—the Capture of Christ—and probably several others, comprise some figures taken from earlier chapels. Fassola says that before this building was erected, the old portico built by Milano Scarrognini stood in the Piazza in front of the Holy Sepulchre, that "in its circuit of three hundred paces it comprised several mysteries of the passion." Among these were probably the present Flagellation, Crowning with Thorns,

and final Taking of Christ before Pilate chapels. Each of these, however, has undergone some modification.

Chapel No. 23. The Capture of Christ.

This chapel is in the Palazzo di Pilato block, though not strictly a suffering under Pontius Pilate. The greater number of the sixteen figures that it contains are old, and of wood, and among these are the figures of Christ, Judas, and Malchus, who is lying on the ground. To show how dust and dirt accumulate in the course of centuries, I may say that Cav. Prof. Antonini told me he had himself unburied the figure of Malchus, which he found more than half covered with earth. We have seen that there are also two figures introduced here which had no connection with the original chapel, I mean of course the old Adam and Eve, who are now doing duty as Roman soldiers. The few remaining figures that are not of wood are given to D'Enrico, and the frescoes are by his brother Melchiorre. Neither figures nor frescoes can be highly praised. The present chapel is not on the site of the old, which I have already explained was on the ground floor of the large house on the visitor's

left as he enters the smaller entrance to the Sacro Monte.

The servants were put to lodge above this old and now derelict Capture chapel when the present one was made. The date of the removal is given by Cusa as 1570, who says that the Marchese del Guasto contributed largely to the expense. If the figures were then completed and arranged as we now see them, Giovanni D'Enrico can have had no hand in them, but it is quite possible that somewhere about 1615–1619, they were again rearranged and perhaps added to. Melchiorre D'Enrico has signed the frescoes in a quasi-cipher and dated them 1619. The old chapel, though, I think, originally larger than it now is, could not have contained all or nearly all the present figures. Any second rearrangement of the chapel may have been due to its incorporation in the Palazzo di Pilato block, which we know was not begun till after 1590. That the removal from the original chapel had been effected before 1586 is shown by the fact that the chapel is given in its present geographical sequence in the edition of Caccia published at the end of that year. The work contains no trace of Tabachetti's hand, and this should make us incline towards thinking

that Tabachetti had not yet come to Varallo by 1570.

Of the former chapel Fassola says :—

"On again descending where formerly was the Capture of Christ, and near the exit [from the Sacro Monte] we came to the porter's lodge. It should be noted that under the porter's room, in the place where the Capture used to be, there are most admirable frescoes by Gaudenzio" (p. 22).

With his accustomed reticence where he fears to give offence, he does not say that the frescoes are going to rack and ruin, but this is what he means; Torrotti expresses himself more freely, saying that a chapel, although derelict, containing paintings by Gaudenzio and his pupils, should not be left to the neglect of servants. These frescoes were removed a year or so ago to the Pinacoteca in the Museum. They are not by Gaudenzio, and are now rightly given to Lanini. They are mere fragments, and of no great importance.

Chapel No. 24. Christ taken to Annas.

This is the one chapel that belongs to the 18th century, having been finished about 1765 at the expense of certain Valsesians residing in Turin. It does not belong to the Palazzo di Pilato block, but I deal with it here to avoid

departure from the prescribed order. The design of the chapel is by Morondi, and the figures by Carlantonio Tandarini, except that of Annas, which is by Giambattista Bernesi of Turin. The frescoes are of the usual drop scene, *barocco*, academic kind, but where the damp has spared them they form an effective background. The figures want concert, and are too much spotted about so as each one to be seen to the best advantage. This, as Tabachetti very well knew, is not in the manner of living action, and the attempt to render it on these principles is doomed to failure; nevertheless many of Tandarini's individual figures are very clever, and have a good deal of a certain somewhat exaggerated force and character. I have already said that from the plan of 1671 "The Widow's Son" would seem to have been formerly on the site of the present Annas chapel.

Chapel No. 25. Christ taken before Caiaphas.

Cusa says that this chapel, which again is not in the Palazzo di Pilato block, adheres very closely to the design of Pellegrino Tibaldi. The figures, thirty-three in number, are by

Plate No. VII. Face p. 170.

"CAIAPHAS."

By Giovanni D'Enrico.

Giovanni D'Enrico and Giacomo Ferro, and the frescoes being dated 1642, we may think the terra-cotta work to be among the last done by D'Enrico on the Sacro Monte. The figure of Caiaphas must be given to him, and it is hard to see how it could have been more dramatically treated. Caiaphas has stepped down from his throne, which is left vacant behind him, and is adjuring Jesus to say whether he is the Christ the Son of God. If it were not for the cobweb between the arm and the body, the photograph which is here given might almost pass as having been taken from life, and the character is so priest-like that it is hard to understand how priests could have tolerated it as they did. Indeed, the figure is so far finer than the general run of Giovanni D'Enrico's work, and so infinitely superior to the four figures of Pilate in the four Pilate chapels, that we should be tempted to give it to some other sculptor if, happily, the Herod did not also show how great D'Enrico could be when he was doing his best, and if the evidence for its having been by him were not so strong.

To the left of Caiaphas's empty throne are two standing figures, which look as if they had been begun for figures of Christ, but were con-

demned as not good enough. They may perhaps be intended for Joseph and Nicodemus. Some few of the other figures, which in all number thirty-three, are also full of character, but the greater part of them do not rise above the level of Giacomo Ferro's supers, and suffer from having lost much paint; nevertheless the chapel is effective, chiefly, doubtless, through the excellence of the Caiaphas himself, and if we could see the work as it was when D'Enrico left it we should doubtless find it more effective still.

The frescoes are by Cristoforo Martinolo, also named Rocca. They are not of remarkable excellence, but form an efficient background, and are among the best preserved on the Sacro Monte. They have also the great merit of being legibly signed and dated.

Chapel No. 26. The Repentance of St. Peter.

Hard by under a portico there is a statue of St. Peter, repentant, and over him there is a cock still crowing. The figure of St. Peter, and presumably that of the cock also, are by D'Enrico. I can find nothing about the date in any author.

This cock is said to have been the chief instrument in a miracle not less noteworthy than any recorded in connection with the Sacro Monte. It seems that on the 3rd of July 1653 a certain Lorenzo Togni from Buccioleto, who had been a martyr to intemperance for many years, came to the Sacro Monte in that state in which martyrs to intemperance must be expected generally to be. It was very early in the morning, but nevertheless the man was drunk, though still just able to go the round of the chapels. Nothing noticeable occurred till he got to the Caiaphas chapel, but here all on a sudden, to the amazement of the man himself, and of others who were standing near, a noise was heard to come from up aloft in the St. Peter chapel, and it was seen that the cock had turned round and was flapping his wings with an expression of great severity. Before they had recovered from their surprise, the bird exclaimed in a loud voice, and with the utmost distinctness, "Ciocc' anch' anc'uei," running the first two words somewhat together, and dwelling long on the last syllable, which is sounded like a long French "eu" and a French "i." These words I am told mean, "Drunk again to-day also?" the "anc'uei" being a Piedmontese *patois* for "ancora oggi."

The bird repeated these words three or four times over, and then turned round on its perch, to all appearance terra cotta again. The effect produced upon the drunkard was such that he could never again be prevailed upon to touch wine, and ever since this chapel has been the one most resorted to by people who wish to give up drinking to excess.

The foregoing story is not given either in Fassola or Torrotti, but my informant, a most intelligent person, assured me that to this day the cocks about Varallo do not unfrequently say "Ciocc' anch' anc'uei"—indeed, I have repeatedly heard them do so with the most admirable distinctness. I am told that cocks sometimes challenge, and wish to fight, well-done cocks on crucifixes, but it is some way from this to the cock on the crucifix beginning to crow too. One does not see where this sort of thing is to end, and once terra-cotta always terra-cotta, is a maxim that a respectable figure would on the whole do well to lay to heart and abide by.

Chapel No. 27. Christ before Pilate.

The Pilate is not nearly so good as the Caiaphas in the preceding chapel, but though

there is not one single figure of superlative excellence, this is still one of D'Enrico's best works, and the Pilate is the best of the four Pilates. The nineteen figures are generally ascribed to him; and, I should say there was less Giacomo Ferro in this chapel than in most of D'Enrico's. Possibly Giacomo Ferro was not yet D'Enrico's assistant. The frescoes are by Antonio, or Tanzio, D'Enrico, but I cannot see much in them to admire.

The date is given by Bordiga as about 1620, but no date is given either by Fassola or Torrotti. The nude figure to the left, seated and holding a spear near the spectator, is said to be a portrait of Tanzio, but Bordiga thinks that if we are to look for the portrait anywhere in this composition, we should do so in the open gallery above the gate of the Pretorium, where we shall find a figure that has nothing to do with the story, and represents a "jocund-looking" but venerable old man, wearing a hat with a white feather in it, and like the portrait of Melchiorre painted by himself in his Last Judgment—presumably the one outside the church at Riva Valdobbia. Bordiga adds that Melchiorre was still living in 1620, when Tanzio was at work on these frescoes.

Chapel No. 28. Christ before Herod.

Bordiga says that this chapel was begun in 1606, as shown by a letter from Monsignor Bescapè, Bishop of Novara, authorising the Fabbricieri to appropriate three hundred scudi from the Mass chest for the purpose of erecting it, but it was not finished until 1638. The statues, thirty-five in number, are by Giovanni D'Enrico, and the frescoes by Tanzio, but we have no means of dating either the one or the other accurately.

The figure of Herod is incomparably finer than any others in the chapel, if we except those of two laughing boys on Herod's left that are hardly seen till one is inside the chapel itself. Take each of the figures separately and few are good. As usual in D'Enrico's chapels, there is a deficiency of the *ensemble* and concert which no one except Tabachetti seems to have been able to give in sculptured groups containing many figures; nevertheless, the Herod and the laughing boys atone almost for any deficiency. Bordiga speaks of the frescoes in the highest terms, but I do not admire them as I should wish to do. They are generally considered as Antonio D'Enrico's finest work on the Sacro Monte.

Plate No. VIII. Face p. 176.

"HEROD."

By Giovanni D'Enrico.

Plate IX. Face p. 177.

"LAUGHING BOYS IN THE HEROD CHAPEL."

By Giovanni D'Enrico.

The figures behind the two boys' heads coming very awkwardly in my photograph, my friend Mr. Gogin has kindly painted them out for me, so as to bring the boys' heads out better.

Chapel No. 29. Christ taken back to Pilate.

This is supposed to be the last work of Giovanni D'Enrico, who, according to Durandi, died in 1644. The scene comprises twenty-three terra-cotta figures, few of them individually good, but nevertheless effective as a whole. One man, the nearest but one to the spectator, must be given to D'Enrico, and perhaps one or two more, but the greater number must have been done by Giacomo Ferro. The frescoes were begun both by Morazzone and Antonio D'Enrico, but Fassola and Torrotti say that neither the one nor the other was able to complete the work, which in their time was still unfinished; but Doctor Morosini was going to get a really good man to finish them without further delay. Eventually the brothers Grandi of Milan came and did the Doric architecture, while Pietro Gianoli did some sibyls, and on the facciata "*il casto Giuseppe portato da due*

Angioli." Gianoli signed his work and dated it 1679. We know, then, that in this case the sculptured figures were placed some years before the background, as probably also with several other chapels; and it may be assumed that generally the terra-cotta figures preceded the background—which was designed for them, and not they for it, except in the case of Gaudenzio Ferrari—who probably conceived both the round and flat work together as part of the same design, and was thus the only artist on the Sacro Monte who carried out the design of uniting painting and sculpture in a single design, under the conditions which strictly it involves.

In connection with this chapel both Fassola and Torrotti say that D'Enrico has intentionally made Christ's face become smaller and smaller during each of these last scenes, as becoming contracted through increase of suffering. I have been unable to see that this is more than fancy on their parts.

It is also in connection with this chapel that we discover the true date of Fassola's book. He says that they had been on the lookout "during the whole *of last year*"—which he gives as 1669—for some one to finish the frescoes. "Now, however," he continues,

"when this book is seeing light," &c. The book therefore should be seeing light in 1670. It is dated 1671. True, Fassola may have been writing at the very end of 1670, and the book may have been published at the beginning of 1671, but perhaps the more natural conclusion is that the same reasons which make publishers wish to misdate their books by a year now, made them wish to do so then, and that though Fassola's book appeared at the end of 1670, as would appear from his own words, it was nevertheless dated 1671.

Chapel No. 30. The Flagellation.

Torrotti and Fassola say that the Christ in this chapel, as well as in all the others, is an actual portrait—and no doubt an admirable one—communicated by Divine inspiration to the many workmen and artists who worked on the Sacro Monte. This, they say, may be known from two documents contemporaneous with Christ Himself, in which His personal appearance is fully set forth, and which seem almost to have been written from the statues now existing at Varallo. The worthy artists who made these statues were by no means given to historical investigations, and were little

likely to know anything about the letters in question; besides, these had only just been discovered, so that there can have been no deception or illusion. Both Fassola and Torrotti give the letters in full, and to their pages the reader who wishes to see them may be referred. Fassola writes:—

"Hora vegga ogni diuoto se rassomigliando queste statue al vero Christo essendo lauorate accidentalmente, parendo da Dio sia dato alli Statuarij, e Pittori il lume della sua Diuina Persona non si hà se non per mera sua disposizione e diachiarazione d'hauer quiui quasi come rinouata, e resa più commoda alla Christianità la sua Redenzione" (p. 103).

The work is mentioned as completed in the 1586 edition of Caccia—this, and the Crowning with Thorns, being the only two that are described as completed of those that now form part of the Palazzo di Pilato block. These two chapels do not in reality, however, belong to the Palazzo di Pilato at all; they existed long before it, and the new work was added on to them. Bordiga says that "an order of Monsignor Bescapè relating to this chapel, and dated February 1, 1605, shows that there was as yet no plan of this part of the Palace of Pilate." I have not seen this order, and can only speak with diffidence, but I do not think the chapel has been much modified since 1586,

beyond the fact that Rocca, whom we have already met with as painting in the Caiaphas chapel in 1642, at some time or another painted a new background, which is now much injured by damp.

Not only does the author of the 1586 Caccia mention the chapel, but he does it with more effusion than is usual with him. He rarely says anything in praise of any but the best work. I do not, therefore, think it likely that his words refer to the original wooden figures, two of which were preserved when the work was remodelled; these two mar the chapel now, and when all the work was of the same calibre it cannot have kindled any enthusiasm in a writer who appears to have known very fairly well which were the best chapels. He says:—

> "Da manigoldi, in atto acerbo e fiero,
> Alla colonna Christo flagellato
> *Da scultor dotto assimigliato al vero*
> Di questo * in un de i lati è dimostrato,
>
> E come fusse macerato e nero,
> D'aspri flagelli percosso, e vergato,
> Di Christo il sacro corpo in ogni parte,
> Vi ha sculto dotto mastro in sottil arte."

I think the reconstruction of the chapel, then, and its assumption of its present state, except that a fresco background was added, should be

* The projected Palazzo di Pilato block.

assigned to some year about 1580–1585, and am disposed to ascribe, at any rate, the figure of the man who is binding Christ to the column to Tabachetti, who was then working on the Sacro Monte, and whose style the work seems to me to resemble more nearly than it does that of D'Enrico. Whoever the chapel is by, it was evidently in its present place and much admired in 1586; there could hardly, therefore, have been any occasion to reconstruct it, especially when so much other work was crying to be done, and when it had, in all probability, been once reconstructed already.

On the whole, until external evidence shows D'Enrico to have done the figures, I shall continue to think that at least one of them, and very possibly all except the two old wooden ones, are by Tabachetti. The foot of the man binding Christ to the column has crumbled away, either because the clay was bad, or from insufficient baking. This is why the figure is propped up with a piece of wood. The damp has made the rope slack, so that the pulling action of the figure is in great measure destroyed, its effect being cancelled by its ineffectualness; but for this the reader will easily make due allowance. The same man reappears presently in the balcony of the Ecce

Plate X. Face p. 182.

"MAN IN BACKGROUND OF THE FLAGELLATION CHAPEL."

Homo chapel, but he is there evidently done by another and much less vigorous hand.

The man in the foreground, who is stooping down and binding his rods, is the same as the one who is kicking Christ in Tabachetti's Journey to Calvary, and is one of those adopted by Tabachetti from Gaudenzio Ferrari's Crucifixion chapel; this figure may perhaps have been an addition by Giovanni D'Enrico, or have been done by an assistant, for it is hardly up to Tabachetti's mark. The two nearest scourgers are fine powerful figures, but I should admit that they remind me rather of D'Enrico than of Tabachetti, though they might also be very well by him, and probably are so.

Fassola says that the graces obtainable by the faithful here have relation to every kind of need; they are in a high degree unspecialised, and that this freedom from specialisation is characteristic of all the chapels of the Passion.

Chapel No. 31. The Crowning with Thorns.

Much that was said about the preceding chapel applies also to this. It is mentioned in the 1586 edition of Caccia as done "*sottilmente in natural ritratto,*" and as being one

of the few works that would form part of the Palazzo di Pilato block that were as yet completed.

That this chapel had undergone one reconstruction before 1586, we may gather from the fact that the left-hand wall is still covered with a fresco of the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise; this has no connection with the Crowning with Thorns, and doubtless formed the background to the original Adam and Eve. I have already said that I am indebted to Signor Arienta for this suggestion. Bordiga calls this subject Christ being Led to be Crowned, and gives it to Crespi da Cerano, but I cannot understand how he can see in the work anything but an Expulsion from Paradise. The chapel having been reconstructed before 1586 on its present site—as it evidently had been—and being admired, is not likely to have been reconstructed a second time, and I am again, therefore, inclined to give the whole work, or at any rate the greater part of it, to Tabachetti, and to reject the statements of Fassola, Torrotti, Bordiga, and Cusa, who all ascribe the figures to D'Enrico. The two men standing up behind Christ, one taunting Him, and the other laughing, are among the finest on the Sacro Monte, and are much more in

Tabachetti's manner than in D'Enrico's. The other figures are, as they were doubtless intended to be, of minor interest.

Some of the frescoes other than those above referred to, were added at a later date, and are said by Bordiga, on the authority of a covenant, dated September 27th, 1608, to have been done by Antonio Rantio, who undertook to paint them for a sum of ten ducatoons. They are without interest.

It was here the Flemish dancer was healed. His name was Bartholomew Jacob, and he came from Graveling in Flanders. It seems there was a ball going on at the house of one of this man's ancestors, and that the Last Sacraments were being carried through the street under the windows of the ball-room. The dancing ought by rights to have been stopped, but the host refused to stop it, and presently the priest who was carrying the Sacrament found a paper under the chalice, written in a handwriting of almost superhuman neatness, presumably that of the Madonna herself, and bearing the words, "Dancer, thou wouldst not stay thy dance: I curse thee, therefore, that thou dance for nine generations." And so he did, he and all his descendants all their lives, till it came to Bartholomew Jacob,

who was the ninth in descent. He too began life dancing, and was still dancing when he started on a pilgrimage to Rome; when, however, he got to the Sacro Monte at Varallo on the 7th of January 1646, he began to feel tired, tremulous, and languid from so much incessant movement. This strange feeling attacked him first at the Nativity Chapel, but by the time he got to the Crowning with Thorns he could stand it no longer, and fell as one dead, to rise again presently perfectly whole, and relieved of his distressing complaint.

Personally I find this story interesting as giving high support to the theory I have been trying to insist upon for some years past, and according to which in a certain sense a man is personally identical with all the generations in the direct line both of his ancestry and his descendants, as well as with himself. The words "Thou shalt dance for nine generations" involve one of the most important points contended for in my earlier book, "Life and Habit." Fassola and Torrotti both say that more pilgrims left alms at this chapel than at any other. In fact they both seem to consider that this chapel did very well. "Quì," says Torrotti, "si colgano elemosine assai," and, as I have said already, it is here

that a few autumn leaves of waxen images still linger.

A few weeks ago I saw the original document in which the story above given was attested. It was dated 1671, and signed, stamped, and sealed as a document of the highest importance. I noticed that in this manuscript, it was a voice that was heard, and not as in Fassola a letter that was found.

Chapel No 32. Christ at the Steps of the Pretorium.

This is not mentioned in the 1586 edition of Caccia, perhaps as being a poor and unimportant work. Fassola says that some of the frescoes, as well as of the statues, which, he says, are of wood, were by Gaudenzio. The other statues are given both by Fassola and Torrotti to D'Enrico, and the paintings to Gianoli, a wealthy Valsesian amateur who lived at Campertogno. Bordiga gives the statues to Ferro, already mentioned as a pupil of D'Enrico, but whoever did them, they are about as bad as they can be—too bad, I should say, for Giacomo Ferro, and I am not sure that they are not of wood even now. No traces of Gaudenzio's frescoes remain. The

chapel seems to have been reconstructed in connection with the *replica* of the Scala Santa up which Christ is going to be conducted. We have seen that the design for these stairs was procured from Rome in 1608 by Francesco Testa, who was then Fabbriciere.

Chapel No 33. Ecce Homo.

This is one of the finest chapels, the concert between the figures being better than in most of D'Enrico's other work, notwithstanding the fact that more than one, and probably several, are old figures taken from chapels that were displaced when the Palazzo di Pilato block was made. The figures are thirty-seven in number, and are disposed in a spacious hall not wholly unlike the vestibule of the Reform Club, Christ and His immediate persecutors appearing in a balustraded balcony above a spacious portico that supports it. This must have been one of D'Enrico's first works on the Sacro Monte, the frescoes having been paid for on Dec. 7, 1612, as shown by Morazzone's receipt which is still in existence, and which is for the sum of 2400 *imperiali.* Of these frescoes it is impossible to speak highly; they look clever at first and from a distance, but do not bear closer attention.

Plate XI. Face p. 189

"STEFANO SCOTTO and Mr. S. BUTLER."

Morazzone took pains with the Journey to Calvary chapel, which was his first work on the Sacro Monte, but never did anything so good again.

Of the terra-cotta figures, the one to the extreme left is certainly by Gaudenzio Ferrari, being another portrait, in nearly the same attitude, of the extreme figure to the left in the Crucifixion chapel. For reasons into which I will enter more fully when I come to this last-named work, I do not doubt that Stefano Scotto, Gaudenzio's master, is the person represented. I had to go inside the chapel to hold a sheet behind the figure in order to detach it from the background, so had myself taken along with it to show how it compares with a living figure. It is generally said at Varallo to be a portrait of Giovanno D'Enrico's brother Tanzio, but this is obviously impossible, for not only does the same person reappear in the Crucifixion chapel, but he is also found in Gaudenzio's early fresco of the Disputa in the Sta. Margherita chapel already referred to, and elsewhere, as I will presently show. I should be sorry to say that any other figure in the Ecce Homo chapel except this is certainly by Gaudenzio, but am inclined to think that two or three others are also by him, the rest being probably all of

them by D'Enrico or some assistant. Some—more especially two children, on the head of one of whom a man has laid his hand—are of extreme beauty. The child that is looking up is among the most beautiful in the whole range of sculpture; the other is not so good, but has suffered in re-painting, the eyelid being made too red; if this were remedied, as it easily might be, the figure would gain greatly. Cav. Prof. Antonini has very successfully substituted plaster hair for the horsehair, which had in great measure fallen off. The motive of this incidental group is repeated, but with less success, in Giovanni D'Enrico's Nailing to the Cross.

There is another child to the extreme right of the composition so commonly and poorly done that it is hard to believe it can be by the same hand, but it is not likely that Giacomo Ferro had as yet become D'Enrico's assistant. The man who is pointing out Christ to this last-named child is far more seriously treated, and might even be an importation from an earlier work. Among other very fine figures is a man who is looking up and holding a staff in his hand; he stands against the wall to the spectator's right among the figures nearest to the grating. There is also an admirable figure

of a man on one knee tying his cross garter and at the same time looking up. This figure is in the background rather hidden away, and is not very well seen from the grating. I should add that the floor of the chapel slopes a little up from the spectator like the stage in a theatre.

The dog in the middle foreground is hollow, as are all the figures, or at any rate many of them, and shows a great hole on the side away from the spectator; it is not fixed to the ground, but stands on its own legs; it was as much as I could do to lift it. I am told the figures were baked down below in the town, and though they are most of them in several pieces it must have been no light work carrying them up the mountain. I have been shown the remains of a furnace near the present church on the Sacro Monte, but believe it was only used for the figures made by Luigi Marchesi in 1826. I should, however, have thought that the figures would have been baked upon the Sacro Monte itself and not in the town.

Of this chapel Fassola says :—

"All the pilgrims of every description come here, because it is at the top of the *Scala Santa* up which they go upon their knees, and there is plenty of room for pilgrims, as the chapel extends the whole width of the staircase. Those

who are oppressed with travail, or fevers, or lawsuits, or unjust persecutions of any description, are comforted on being commended to this Christ." "Vi sono quì," says Torrotti, "pascoli deliziosi per i curiosi e più dotti."

I daresay that on the great festivals of the Church, some pilgrims may still go up the Scala Santa kneeling, but they do not commonly do so. Often as I have been at the Sacro Monte, I never yet saw a pilgrim mount the staircase except on his feet in the usual way. It must be a very painful difficult thing to go up twenty-eight consecutive high steps on one's knees; I tried it, but gave it up after a very few steps, and do not recommend any of my readers to even do as much as this.

Chapel No. 34. Pilate Washing his Hands.

Fassola, Torrotti, and Bordiga all call this one of the best chapels, but neither Jones nor I could see that it was nearly so successful as the preceding. The seventeen modelled figures are by Giovanni D'Enrico, and the frescoes by his brother Antonio or Tanzio. One or two of the figures—especially a man putting his finger to his mouth derisively, are excellent, but the Pilate is a complete failure; and it is

hard to think it can have been done, as it probably nevertheless was, by the sculptor of the Caiaphas and Herod figures. Bordiga says that a contract was made with Caccia (not the historian), called Moncalvo, for the frescoes. This was the painter who did the backgrounds for the Crea chapels, but the contract was never carried out, probably because Antonio D'Enrico returned from Rome. It was dated November 1616, so that the terra-cotta figures probably belong to this year or to those that immediately preceded it.

Chapel No. 35. Christ Condemned to Death.

This is better than the preceding chapel, and contains some good individual figures. The statues are twenty-seven in number, and were modelled by D'Enrico prior to the year 1614, in which year Morazzone was paid twelve hundred imperiali for having painted the frescoes, so that it was one of his earlier works, but the Pilate is again a failure. People who have been badly treated, and who have suffered from some injustice, are more especially recommended by Fassola "to try this Christ, who moves the pity of all who look upon Him."

He continues that it was the intention to add some other chapels at the end of the portico of the Palazzo di Pilato, but this intention was not carried out. Bordiga calls attention to the view on the right, looking over Varallo and the Mastallone, as soon as the portico is passed.

Plate XII.

Face p. 195.

TABACHETTI'S "JOURNEY TO CALVARY."

General View to the Right.

CHAPTER XIII.

MYSTERIES OF THE PASSION AND DEATH.

THE Palazzo di Pilato is now ended, and we begin with the mysteries of the Passion and Death of the Redeemer, the first of which is set forth in

CHAPEL No. 36. THE JOURNEY TO CALVARY.

This, having regard to the terra-cotta figures alone, is by far the finest work on the Sacro Monte, and it is hardly too much to say that no one who has not seen it knows what sculpture can do. I have sufficiently shown that all the authorities, not one of whom has ever so much as seen a page of Caccia, are wrong by at least twenty years, when they say that Tabachetti completed the work in 1606. Bordiga refers, and this time I have no doubt accurately, to a deed drawn up in 1602, in accordance with which the fresco background was begun by Antonio Gandino, a painter of

Brescia; this alone should have made Bordiga suspect that the terra-cotta work had been already completed, but he does not appear to have noted the fact, and goes on to say that the agreement with Gandino was cancelled by Bishop Bescapè in 1604, and that his work was destroyed, the chapel being handed over to Morazzone, who painted it in 1605, and was paid 1400 lire, besides twenty gold scudi. Morazzone has followed Gaudenzio boldly, repeating several of his fresco figures, as Tabachetti, with admirable good taste, had repeated several of his terra-cotta ones, while completely varying the action. The right-hand frescoes, and part of those on the wall opposite the spectator, have been recently cut away in squares, and relined, as the wall was perishing from damp.

The statues consist of about forty figures of men, women, and children, and nine horses, all rather larger than life. They too have suffered from the effect of damp upon the paint; nevertheless, a more permanent and satisfactory kind of pigment has been used here than in most of the chapels; the work does not seem to have been much, if at all repainted, since Tabachetti left it. One figure of a child in the foreground has disappeared, the marks of its feet and two

Plate XIII.

Face p. 196.

TABACHETTI'S "JOURNEY TO CALVARY."

St. John, the Madonna, with the other Maries.

little bits of rusty iron alone show where it was; the woman who was holding it also remains without an arm. I am tempted to think that some disturbing cause has affected a girl who is holding a puppy, a little to the right of this last figure, and doubt whether something that accompanied her may not have perished; at any rate, it does not group with the other figures as well as these do with one another; this, however, is a very small blemish. The work is one that will grow upon the reader the more he studies it, and should rank as the most successfully ambitious of medieval compositions in sculpture, no less surely than Gaudenzio's Crucifixion chapel, having regard to grandeur of scheme as well as execution, should rank as the most daring among Italian works of art in general. I am aware that this must strike many of my readers as in all probability a very exaggerated estimate, but can only repeat that I have studied these works for the last twenty years with every desire not to let a false impression run away with me, and that each successive visit to Varallo, while tending somewhat to lower my estimate of Giovanni D'Enrico—unless when he is at his very best—has increased my admiration for both Gaudenzio Ferrari and Tabachetti, as

also, I would add, for the sculptor of the Massacre of the Innocents chapel.

It cannot, indeed, be pretended that Tabachetti's style is as pure as that of his great predecessor, but what it has lost in purity it has gained in freedom and vigour. It is not possible that an artist working in the years 1580–1585 should present to us traces of the archaism which even the most advanced sculptors of half a century earlier had not wholly lost. The stronger a man is the more certainly will he be modified by his own times as well as modify them, and in an age of *barocco* we must not look for Donatellos. Still, the more Tabachetti's work is examined the more will it be observed that he took no harm from the *barocco*, but kept its freedom while avoiding its coarseness and exaggeration. For reasons explained in an earlier chapter his figures are not generally portraits, but he is eminently realistic, and if he did the Vecchietto, of which I have given a photograph at the beginning of this book, he must be credited with one of the most living figures that have ever been made—a figure which rides on the very highest crest of the wave, and neither admits possibility of further advance towards realism without defeating its own purpose, nor

Plate XIV. Face p. 198.

TABACHETTI'S "STA. VERONICA,"

And Man with Goitre.

shows even the slightest sign of decadence. Of the figure of the Countess of Serravalle, to which I have already referred, Torrotti said it was so much admired in his day that certain Venetian cavaliers offered to buy it for its weight in gold, but that the mere consideration of such an offer would be high treason (*lesa Maestà*) to the Sacro Monte. Fassola and Torrotti, as well as Bordiga and Cusa, are evidently alive to the fact that as far as sculpture goes we have here the highest triumph attained on the Sacro Monte of Varallo.

I had better perhaps give the words in which Caccia describes the work. In the 1586 edition, we read, in the preliminary prose part, as follows :—

"Come N. S. è condotto alla morte con la croce alle spalle, qual si vede tutto di rilievo."

The poetical account runs thus :—

" Si trova poi in una Chiesa nera
Con spettacolo fiero accompagnato
Da soldati, e da gente molto fiera,
Con la Croce alle spalle incaminato
Christo Giesu in mezzo à l'empia schiera,
Seguendolo Giovanni addolorato,
Che di Giesu sostien la sconsolata
Madre, da Maddalena accompagnata."

In the 1591 edition, the prose description of the work runs;—

"Come N.S. è condotto alla morte con la Croce sopra delle spalle, quali si vedeno tutto di rilieuo bellissi."

I have no copy of the poetical part of this edition before me, but believe it to be identical with the version already given. The impression left upon me is that the work in 1586 was only just finished enough to allow it to be called finished, and that its full excellence was not yet displayed to the public, though it was about to be so very shortly.

Signor Arienta tells me that Tabachetti has adhered rather closely to a design for the same subject by Albert Durer, but I have failed to find the design to which he is referring.

Bordiga again calls attention to the extreme beauty of the view of Varallo that is to be had on leaving this chapel.

Chapel No. 37. The Nailing of Christ to the Cross.

This and the two following chapels are on the top of the small rise of some fifteen or twenty feet in which Bernardino Caimi is said to have seen a resemblance to Mount Calvary; they are approached by a staircase which

Plate XV. Face p. 200.

TABACHETTI'S "JOURNEY TO CALVARY."

The Two Thieves and their Driver.

leads directly to Giovanni D'Enrico's largest work.

Bordiga says that the chapel was begun in 1589 at the expense of Marchese Giacomo d'Adda; he probably, however, refers only to the building itself. It is not mentioned as even contemplated in the 1586 edition of Caccia, nor yet, unless my memory fails me, in that of 1590. It is not known when the terra-cotta work was begun, but it was not yet quite finished in 1644, when, as I have said, D'Enrico died.

The frescoes are by Melchiorre Gilardini, and have been sufficiently praised by other writers; they are fairly well preserved, and show, as in the preceding chapel and in Gaudenzio's Crucifixion, how much more is to be said for the union of painting and sculpture when both are in the hands of capable men, than we are apt to think. If the reader will divest the sculpture of its colour and background, how cold and uninteresting will it not seem in comparison even with its present somewhat impaired splendour. Looking at the really marvellous results that have been achieved, we cannot refrain from a passing regret at the spite that threw Tabachetti half a century off Gaudenzio, instead of letting them come together, but we must take these things as we find them.

On first seeing Giovanni D'Enrico's Nailing to the Cross we are tempted to think it even finer than the Journey to Calvary. The work is larger, comprising some twenty or so more terra-cotta figures—making about sixty in all—and ten horses, all rather larger than life, but the first impression soon wears off, and the arrangement is then felt to be artificial as compared with Tabachetti's. Tabachetti made a great point when, instead of keeping his floor flat or sloping it evenly up to any one side, he threw his stage up towards one corner, which is much higher than any other. The unevenness, and irregular unevenness, of the ground is of the greatest assistance to him, by giving him variety of plane, and hence a way of escaping monotony without further effort on his part. If D'Enrico had taken his ground down from the corner up to which Tabachetti had led it, he would have secured both continuity with Tabachetti's scene, and an irregularly uneven surface, without repeating his predecessor's arrangement. True, the procession was supposed to be at the top of Mount Calvary, but that is a detail. As it is, D'Enrico has copied Tabachetti in making his ground slope, but, unless my memory fails me, has made it slope evenly along the whole width of the chapel, from

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Plate XVI

Face p. 203.

GAUDENZIO FERRARI'S "CRUCIFIXION."

General View, looking towards the Bad Thief.

the foreground to the wall at the back—with the exception of a small mound in the middle background. The horses are arranged all round the walls, and the soldiers are all alongside of the horses, and every figure is so placed as to show itself to the greatest advantage. This perhaps is exaggeration, but there is enough truth in it to help the reader who is unfamiliar with this class of work to apprehend Tabachetti's superiority more readily than he might otherwise do in the short time that tourists commonly have at their disposal. The general impression left upon myself and Jones was that it contains much more of Giacomo Ferro than of D'Enrico; but in spite of this it is impossible to deny that the work is important and on the whole impressive.

Chapel No 38. The Crucifixion.

Neither Fassola nor Torrotti date this work, but I have already shown reasons for believing that it should be given to the years 1524–1528. Fassola says that the figure of Christ on the Cross is not the original one, which was stolen, and somehow or other found its way to the Church of S. Andrea at Vercelli, where, according to Colombo (p. 237), a crucifix, tradi-

tionally said to be this one, was preserved until the close of the last century. Bordiga says that there is no reason to believe this story. The present crucifix is of wood, and is probably an old one long venerated, and embodied in his work by Gaudenzio himself, partly out of respect to public feeling, and partly, perhaps, as an unexceptionable excuse for avoiding a great difficulty. The thieves also, according to Bordiga and Cusa, are of wood, not terra-cotta, being done from models in clay by Gaudenzio as though the wood were marble. We may be sure there was an excellent reason for this solitary instance of a return to wood, but it is not immediately apparent to a layman.

We have met with the extreme figure to the spectator's left in the Ecce Homo chapel. He is also, as I have said, found in the Disputa fresco, done some twenty years or so before the work we are now considering, and we might be tempted to think that the person who was so powerfully impressed on Gaudenzio's mind during so many years was some Varallo notable, or failing this that he was some model whom he was in the habit of employing. This, however, is not so; for in the first place the supposed model was an old man in, say, 1507,

Plate XVII.

Face p. 204.

GAUDENZIO FERRARI'S "CRUCIFIXION."

General View, looking towards the Good Thief.

and he is not a day older in 1527, so that in 1527 Gaudenzio was working from a strong residuary impression of a figure with which he had been familiar many years previously and not from life; and in the second, we find the head repeated in the works of Milanese artists who in all probability never came near Varallo. We certainly find it in a drawing, of which I give a reduced reproduction, and which the British Museum authorities ascribe, no doubt correctly, to Bernardino de' Conti. I also recognise it unquestionably in a drawing in the Windsor collection ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci—a drawing, however, which it is not easy to think is actually by him. I have no doubt that a reminiscence of the same head is intended in a drawing ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, only that the artist, whoever he may be, has added hair (which is obviously not drawn from nature), and has not produced so good a likeness as Gaudenzio and Bernardino de' Conti have done, but about this last I am less certain. At any rate there can be no doubt that the figure represents a Milanese character who in the time of Gaudenzio's youth was familiar to Milanese artists, and who made a deep impression upon more than one of them. This will

be even more apparent to those who are familiar with the terra-cotta figures at Varallo, for these can be seen from several points of view, and a fuller knowledge of the head is thus obtained than a flat impression from a single point can give.

It is not likely that the figure is that of a mere model, for it has no, or very little connection with the action of the piece, and is evidently placed where it is—the extreme figure to the left, which is always a place of honour—for the sake of introducing the portrait into the composition. Gaudenzio would not have been so impressed, say, with old Christie* as to give his portrait from memory twenty years after he had seen him last, to put this portrait in the place of honour, and to make the work much more emphatic as a portrait than as the figure of an actor in his drama, inasmuch as he has turned the head towards the spectator and away from the central incident. It is more probable, then, that we must look for some well-known Milanese art-world character as the original for which the figure was intended.

We know that Gaudenzio Ferrari studied under Stefano Scotto, and have every reason

* A famous model of some five-and-twenty years ago.

Plate XVIII. Face p. 216.

"STEFANO SCOTTO and LEONARDO DA VINCI.

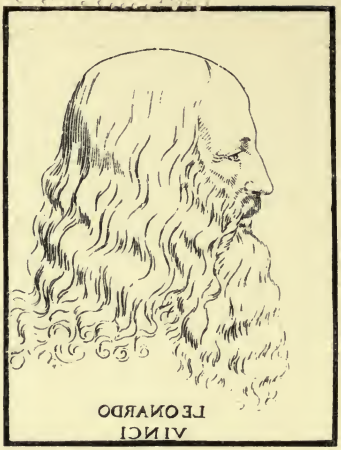

Fig. 1.

PROFILE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI BY HIMSELF (REVERSED).

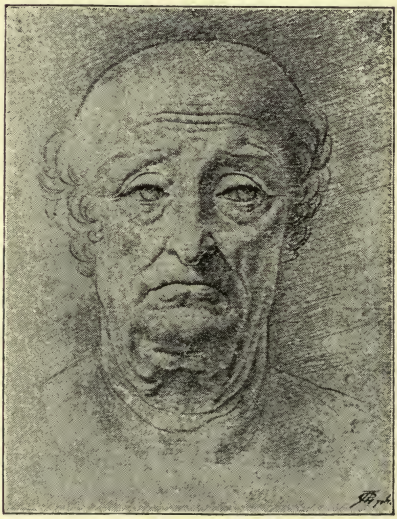

Fig. 2.

STEFANO SCOTTO (?).

From a Drawing by Bernardino de' Conti.

Plate XIX.

to think that Bernardino de' Conti—who, I see, studied in the school of Foppa, one of Scotto's predecessors, if not under Scotto himself, must have known him perfectly well. Leonardo da Vinci kept the rival school at Milan, and the two schools were to one another much what those kept by the late Mr. F. S. Cary and Mr. Lee were some thirty years ago in London. Leonardo, therefore, also doubtless knew Scotto by sight if not personally. I incline to think, then, that we have here the original we are looking for, and that Gaudenzio when working at what he probably regarded as the most important work of his life determined to introduce his master, just as I, if I were writing a novel, might be tempted to introduce a reminiscence of my own old schoolmaster, and to make the portrait as faithful as I could.

I am confirmed in this opinion by noting, as I have done for many years past, that the figure next to that of Scotto is not unlike the portraits of Leonardo da Vinci, of which I give the one (whether by himself or no I do not know) that I believe to be the best. I had been reminded of Leonardo da Vinci by this figure long before I knew of Scotto's existence, and had often wondered why he was not made the

outside and most prominent figure; now, then, that I see reason to think the outside figure intended for Gaudenzio's own master, I understand why the preference has been given him, and have little doubt that next to his own master Gaudenzio has placed the other great contemporary art-teacher at Milan whose pupil he never actually was, but whose influence he must have felt profoundly. I also derive an impression that Gaudenzio liked and respected Scotto though he may have laughed at him, but that he did not like Leonardo, who by the way had been dead about ten years when this figure was placed where it now is.

I see, therefore, the two figures as those of Scotto and of Leonardo da Vinci, and think it likely that in the one portrait we have by far the most characteristic likeness of Leonardo that has come down to us. In his own drawings of himself he made himself out such as he wanted others to think him; here, if I mistake not, he has been rendered as others saw him. The portrait of Scotto is beyond question an admirable likeness; it is not likely that the Leonardo is less successful, and we find in the searching, eager, harassed, and harassing unquiet of the figure here given a

more acceptable rendering of Leonardo's character and appearance than any among the likenesses of himself which are more or less plausibly ascribed to him. The question is one of so much interest that I must defer its fuller treatment for another work, in which I hope to deal with the portraits of Giovanni and Gentile Bellini, and with Holbein's "Danse des Paysans." I have, however, given above the greater part of the information of which I am as yet possessed upon the subject. In conclusion, I may say that I mentioned the matter to Signor Boccioloni the Sindaco of Varallo, and to other friends with whom I have discussed the question on the spot, and found that people generally seemed to consider the case as rather a strong one.

As regards the portraits supposed to be found on the frescoes, they are all so doubtful that I will refrain from discussing them, but will refer my readers to Colombo. The only exception is a portrait of one of the Scarrognini family which is seen on the right-hand wall above the door, the fact of the portraiture being attested by a barbarous scrawl upon the fresco itself.

Caccia says of the work with more enthusiasm than even I can command, but in a style

of poetry which I find it fairly easy to render, that we may see among the spectators

> ". . . . à maraviglia,
> Vi son più donne con la sua famiglia;"

which means in English—

> "And here you may behold with wondering eyes,
> Several ladies with their families."

He continues that

> "Gli Angeli star nel ciel tutti dolenti
> Si veggon per pietà del suo Signore,
> E turbati mostrarsi gli elementi,
> Privi del sole, e d' ogni suo splendore,
> E farsi terremoti, e nascer venti,
> Par che si veda, d' estremo dolore,
> E il tutto esser non pinto ne in scultura,
> Ma dell' istesso parto di Natura.
>
> "E se a pieno volessi ricontare
> Di questo tempio la bellezza, e l' arte,
> Le statue, le pitture, e l' opre rare,
> Saria (?) un vergar in infinite carte
> Che non han queste in tutto il mondo pare,
> Cerchisi pur in qual si voglia parte,
> Che di Fidia, Prasitele, e d' Apelle,
> Ne di Zeuxi non fur l' opre si belle."
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Search the world through in whatsoever part,
> And scan each best known masterpiece of art,
> In Phidias or Praxiteles or Apelles,
> You will find nothing that done half so well is."

In this translation I have again attempted to

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Plate XX. Face p. 210.

GAUDENZIO FERRARI'S "CRUCIFIXION."

The Bad Thief.

preserve—not to say pickle—the spirit of the original.

Returning to the work as a whole, if the modelled figures fail anywhere it is in respect of action — more especially as regards the figures to the spectator's right, which want the concert and connection without which a scene ceases to be dramatic, and becomes a mere assemblage of figures placed in juxtaposition. It would be going too far to say that complaint on this score can be justly insisted on in respect even of these figures; nevertheless it will be felt that Gaudenzio Ferrari the painter could harmonise his figures and give them a unity of action which was denied to him as a sculptor. It must not be forgotten that his modelled work derives an adventitious merit from the splendour of the frescoes with which it is surrounded, and from our admiration of the astounding range of power manifested by their author.

As a painter, it must be admitted that Gaudenzio Ferrari was second to very few that had gone before him, but as a sculptor, he did not do enough to attain perfect mastery over his art. If he had done as much in sculpture as in painting he would doubtless have been as great a master of the one as the

other; as it was, in sculpture he never got beyond the stage of being an exceedingly able and interesting scholar;—this, however, is just the kind of person whose work in spite of imperfection is most permanently delightful. Among the defects which he might have overcome is one that is visible in his earlier painting as well as in his sculpture, and which in painting he got rid of, though evidently not without difficulty—I mean, a tendency to get some of his figures unduly below life size. I have often seen in his paintings that he has got his figures rather below life size, when apparently intending that they should be full-sized, and worse than this, that some are smaller in proportion than others. Nevertheless, when we bear in mind that the Crucifixion chapel was the first work of its kind, that it consists of four large walls and a ceiling covered with magnificent frescoes, comprising about 150 figures; that it contains twenty-six life-sized statues, two of them on horseback, and much detail by way of accessory, all done with the utmost care, and all coloured up to nature,—when we bear this in mind and realise what it all means, it is not easy to refrain from saying, as I have earlier done, that the Crucifixion chapel is the most daringly ambitious work of

art that any one man was ever yet known to undertake; and if we could see it as Gaudenzio left it, we should probably own that in the skill with which the conception was carried out, no less than in its initial daring, it should rank as perhaps the most remarkable work of art that even Italy has produced.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHAPEL No. 39. THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

FASSOLA and Torrotti both say that the terra-cotta figures here are by a pupil of Giovanni D'Enrico. Bordiga says that the three figures forming the group upon the cross were done contemporaneously with the Nailing of Christ to the Cross, which we have already considered, and are in the style of D'Enrico. If so, they are not in his best style, while the others are among the worst on the Sacro Monte, with the exception of one, which I never even observed until last summer, so completely is it overpowered by the worse than mediocrity with which it is surrounded. This figure is perhaps, take it all round, the finest on the Sacro Monte, and is generally known as "Il Vecchietto" or "the little old man." It is given as the frontispiece of this book.

I was led to observe it by a casual remark made by my old and valued friend Signor

Dionigi Negri of Varallo, to whom I am indebted for invaluable assistance in writing this book, and indeed at whose instigation it was undertaken. He told me there was a portrait of the man who gave this part of the ground to the founders of the Sanctuary; he was believed to be a small peasant proprietor—one of the "alcuni particolari poueri" mentioned by Fassola as owning the site—who, having been asked to sell the land, gave it instead. This was the story, but I knew that the land was given not later than 1490-1493, whereas the chapel in question is not earlier than 1630, when no portrait of the peasant benefactor was possible. I therefore went to the chapel, and finding the figure, saw what must be obvious to any one who looks at it with attention, I mean, firstly, how fine it was, and secondly, that it had not been designed for its present place.

This last is clear from the hand, which from outside at first appears to be holding a pair of pincers and a hammer, as though to assist at the Deposition, but which proves to have been originally designed to hold a stick—or something round, the hammer and pincers being at present tied on with a piece of string, to a hand that is not holding them. I asked the opinion of Cav. Prof Antonini of Varallo and his son,

both of them admirable sculptors, and found them as decided as myself in their admiration of the figure. Both of them, at different times, were good enough to go inside the chapel with me, and both agreed with me that the figure was no part of the design of the group in which it now is. Cav. Prof. Antonini thought the whole right arm had been restored, but it was getting dusk when he suggested this, and I could not see clearly enough to form an opinion; I have the greatest diffidence in differing from so excellent an authority, but so far as I could see, I did not think there had been any restoration. I thought nothing had been done except to put a piece of string through the hole in the hand where a stick or roll had been, and to hang the hammer and pincers with it. Leaving Varallo early on the following morning, I was unable to see the figure again by daylight, and must allow the question of restoration or non-restoration to remain unsettled.

There is a large well-defined patch of mended ground covering the space occupied by the figure itself. There is no other such patch under any other figure, and the most reasonable inference is that some alteration has been made here. The expression, moreover, of the face is not suitable for a Deposition.

There is a holy tranquil smile of joy, thankfulness, and satisfaction, which perfectly well befits one who is looking up into the heavens, as he might at an Assumption of the Virgin, or an Ascension, but is not the expression which so consummate an artist as the man who made this figure, would give to a bystander at a Deposition from the Cross. Grief and horror, would be still too recent to admit of the sweet serene air of ineffable contentment which is here given.

Lastly, the style of the work is so different from that of all the other figures in the chapel, that no solidarity can be seen between it and them. It would be too much to say that the others are as bad as this is good, but the difference between Rembrandt's old woman in our National Gallery and an average Royal Academy portrait of fifty years ago, is not more striking than that between the Vecchietto and his immediate neighbours.

I can find no mention of the figure in Fassola, or Torrotti. Bordiga says, "On the left there is a man in peasant's costume, holding his hat in reverence of Jesus, and said to be a benefactor of the chapel." He does not say anything about the excellence of the workmanship, nor, indeed, have I heard any one,

except the two sculptors, Cav. Prof. Antonini and his son, speak of the work in terms which showed a perception of its merit. If the world knows little of its greatest men it seems to know not much more about its greatest works of art, nor, if it continues to look for guidance in this matter to professional critics and society art-dabblers, is it likely to improve its knowledge. Cusa says of it :—

"È fra essi un vecchietto naturale assai pel rozzo costume che veste, e per la semplicità del atto ; egli guarda Gesù in atto di levarsi il cappello, mentre con l'altra mano tiene le tenaglie ed il martello. Lo si dice ritratto di un Rimellese, benefattore della cappella."

I asked the two sculptors Antonini if they could help me in settling the question to whom the work should be assigned, and they agreed with me that it could not be given to Gaudenzio. It is too masterly, easy, and too like the work of Velasquez in painting, to be by one who is not known to have done more in sculpture than some two score or so of figures on the Sacro Monte now remaining, and a few others that have been lost. The Vecchietto is the work of one to whom modelling in clay was like breathing, walking, or eating and drinking, and Gaudenzio never reached such freedom and proficiency as this.

With few exceptions even the best art-work falls into one of two classes, and offers signs either of immaturity or decline. Take Donatello, and Luca della Robbia, or, in painting, Giovanni Bellini, John Van Eyck, Holbein, Giotto, and even Gaudenzio Ferarri in his earlier work; take again, in music, Purcell and Corelli; no words of affectionate admiration are good enough for any one of these great men, but they none of them say the last word that is to be said in their respective arts. Michael Angelo said the last word; but then he said just a word or two over. So with Titian and Leonardo Da Vinci, and in music with Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. We admire them, and know that each in many respects surpassed everything that has been done either before or since, but in each case (and more especially with the three last named) we feel the presence of an autumnal tint over all the luxuriance of development, which, while hardly detracting from the pleasure we receive, still tells of an art that has taken not an upward but a downward path. I know that I am apt to take fancies to works of art and artists; I hold, for example, that my friend Mr. H. F. Jones's songs, of which I have given the titles at the end of this volume, are finer than an

equal number of any written by any other living composer—and I believe that people will one day agree with me, though they will doubtless take their time in doing so—but with all this tendency towards extravagance I endeavour to preserve a method in my madness, and with most works find that they fall readily into the growing or the decaying. It is only with very few, as with Homer and Shakespeare at their best, the Venus of Milo, the Ilyssus, the finest work of Rembrandt, Giorgione, and Velasquez, and in music with Handel, that I can see no step left unclimbed, yet none taken on the downward path. Assuredly the Vecchietto must be classed with the very few works which, being of the kind of fruit that they are, are dead ripe, without one trace either of immaturity or decay.

Difficult, however, as the problem who made this statue is, it is simplified by the reflection that it can only be given either to Gaudenzio or Tabachetti. I suggested D'Enrico's name to Cav. Prof. Antonini to see how he received it, but—thinking doubtless more of Giacomo Ferro than of D'Enrico—he said "E-whew," and tossed his thumb over his shoulder, as only an Italian can, as much as to say that D'Enrico set about his figures with too light a heart to

get a Vecchietto out of them; Gaudenzio, then, being impossible and D'Enrico ordered out of court, it only remains to give the work to Tabachetti, with whose sleeping St. Joseph and with not a little else of whose work it presents much analogy; for the notion that a stranger of name unknown came to Varallo, did this single figure, and then went away without doing any more either there or anywhere else in the least like it, is as incredible as that it is the work of D'Enrico.

As for the question of the source from which the figure came we should remember that the *Chiesa Vecchia dell' Assunta* was pulled down at the end of the last century; and this, considering the excellent preservation in which the Vecchietto is still found, and the comparatively recent appearance of the disturbance of the ground under his feet, seems the most likely place for him to have come from. There were two opportunities in this church, one of which certainly was, while the other very well might have been, made the occasion for a group of figures with upturned heads. The first of these, of course, is the Assumption of the Madonna, of which Caccia says there was a representation of her "*Come ascese in Cielo, con le statue delli dodeci Apostoli intorno di*

rilievo," and there may very well have been a benefactor or so in addition. The second was the impress of our Saviour's last footprint on the Mount of Olives before He ascended into heaven. This is mentioned by Fassola as a feature of special importance, and as having had an indulgence conceded to it by the Pope in 1488 while it was on its road from Jerusalem. This relic was held in great veneration, and it is easy to imagine that its effect may have been enhanced by surrounding it with figures looking upwards into the heavens towards the clouds that had already received the body of the Redeemer. All this, however, is mere conjecture, for there is not a tittle of evidence in support of it, and we are left practically with nothing more than we can still see within the limits of the figure itself to give a clue either to its maker, or the source from which it came, but we may incline to think that it is the portrait of a benefactor, for no one but a benefactor would have been treated with so much realism. The man is not a mere peasant; his clothes are homely, but they are good, and there is that about him which harmonises well enough with his having been in a position of comfort. Common peasants may be seen in the Shepherd's chapel, and the

Vecchietto is clearly of higher social status than these. He looks like a Valsesian yeoman or peasant proprietor, of some substance; and he was doubtless a benefactor, not of this, but some other chapel.

I have said there are analogies between this figure and others by Tabachetti which after all make it not very difficult to decide the question to whom it should be given. We do not, indeed, find another Vecchietto, but we shall find more than one figure that exhibits equal truth to nature, and equal freedom from exaggeration. It is not possible, for example, to have greater truth to nature than we find in the figures of Adam and Eve in the first chapel. There is not one trace either of too much or too little, of exaggeration or of shortcoming; the nude figure of a man and of a woman were wanted, and the nude figure of a man and of a woman are given, with neither more or less modelling than what would be most naturally seen in a young and comely couple. So again with the charming figure of the Virgin sewing in the First Vision of St. Joseph chapel. The Virgin and the Vecchietto are as unlike each other as two figures can be, but they are both stamped with the same freedom from affectation, and the same absolute

and easy mastery over the means employed. The same applies to the sleeping St. Joseph, in which case there is a closer analogy between the two figures themselves. It applies also to a not inconsiderable extent to the man with a goitre who is leading Christ in the Calvary chapel. This figure is not done from life, being a repetition of one by Gaudenzio, but it is so living that we feel sure it would have been more living still if Tabachetti had had the model before him from which Gaudenzio in all probability actually worked. At Crea, there are other figures by Tabachetti to which I will call attention presently, and which present not inconsiderable analogies to the Vecchietto. I explain the fact that the analogies are not closer, by reflecting that this is the one of the few cases in which Tabachetti has left us a piece of portrait work, pure and simple, and that his treatment of the head and figure in pure portraiture, would naturally differ from that adopted in an ideal and imaginative work.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PIETÀ AND REMAINING CHAPELS.

THE remaining chapels are few in number, and, whatever they may once have been, unimportant in character. The first is

CHAPEL NO. 40. THE PIETÀ.

The three preceding chapels are supposed to be on Mount Calvary, and from them we descend by a flight of stone steps to the level of the piazza. Immediately on reaching this we come upon the Pietà. We have seen that this chapel originally contained Gaudenzio's Journey to Calvary, and that the fresco background still, in so far as it is not destroyed, treats this subject, while the modelled figures represent the Pietà. Of Gaudenzio's original work Caccia says :—

> "Come fu Christo de' panni spogliato,
> Montando il Monte poi Calvario detto,
> Nel mezzo a manigoldi mal trattato,
> Contemplar possi con pietoso affetto,

Seguito da Maria e da l'amato
Discepolo di lui, et è l'effetto
Sculto si bene e doitamente fatto
Che sembra vero e non del ver ritratto."

"Per una scala asceso al Sacro Monte
Si entra nel più d'ogn' altro sacro tempio," &c.

The words "*montando il monte poi*," &c., must refer to a supposed ascent on the part of Christ Himself, for Gaudenzio's work was on a level with Tabachetti's present Journey to Calvary which Caccia has just described, and Caccia goes on to say that from Gaudenzio's chapel (the present Pietà) one "ascends by a staircase to" the most sacred chapel of all—the Crucifixion—as one does at present. That the present Pietà and the adjacent Entombment chapels were once one chapel, may be seen by any one who examines the vaulting inside the first-named chapel. Signor Arienta pointed this out to me, and at the same time called my attention to the fact that Gaudenzio's fresco on the wall facing the spectator does not turn the corner and join on with the subject that fills the left-hand wall. A flag and a horse are cut off, and the rest of them is not seen. I sometimes question whether the original wooden-figured entombment was in the chapel in which the present

modern figures are seen, but it probably was so.

There was also a fainting Madonna mentioned in the prose part of Caccia as a work by itself and described as follows :—

"Come la Madonna è tramortita vedendo N.S. condotto à morte."

This is not referred to in the poetical part, and must have been a mere cell occupied by a single figure. No doubt it was seen through the window that is still approached by two steps on the south side of the present Pietà, and the space it occupied has been thrown into the present work.

I do not know when Gaudenzio's Journey to Calvary was dispersed, but it was some time, doubtless, between 1600 and 1644. It is puzzling to note that the Pietà appears in the plan of 1671 as situated rather in the part of the building now occupied by the Entombment than by the Pietà, while the 39 that should mark the site of the Entombment does not appear ; but this is perhaps only an error in the plan itself. I find, however, the attempt to understand the changes that have taken place here so difficult that I shall abandon it and will return to the present aspect of the work.

Torrotti says that some of the statues in the present chapel are by Gaudenzio, which they are not. Fassola gives them all to Giovanni D'Enrico; Bordiga speaks of the work in the highest terms, but for my own part I do not admire it, nor, I am afraid, can I accept the more fresh-looking parts of the fresco background as by Gaudenzio. I do not doubt that his work has been in these parts repainted, and that the outlines alone are really his. It is not likely we have lost much by the repainting, for where the work has not been touched it has so perished as to be hardly worth preserving, and we may think that what has been repainted was in much the same state. This is the only chapel in which Gaudenzio's frescoes at Varallo have been much repainted. If those in the Crucifixion and Magi chapels have been retouched they have taken little harm; the frescoes in the church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie have certainly not been touched, and are in such good preservation that it may be questioned whether they ever looked much better than they do now. The fine oil picture in the church of S. Gaudenzio has gone a little yellow through the darkening of the oil, but is in a good state, and generally, though no painter of the highest

rank has been so much neglected, or suffered more from the actual destruction of his works, yet for the most part Gaudenzio has been spared the reckless restoration which is the most cruel ill that can befall an artist.

Chapel No. 41. The Entombment.

We have already seen that this was the first chapel with figures in it on the Sacro Monte. Of the old eight wooden figures that it contained, two are still on the mountain in a sort of vault adjacent to, or under, the main church, and near the furnace in which those that superseded them were baked. Six are in the Museum at Varallo. I saw them a few weeks ago, not yet arranged, leaning up against the wall with very battered and dilapidated glories; the recumbent Christ was standing more or less on end, and the whole group was in a pathetic state of dismemberment that will doubtless soon make way for a return to their earlier arrangement. The figures are interesting, but it cannot be pretended that they are of great value. They look very much as if they had been out somewhere the night before.

Of the figures in the present chapel the less said the better.

Remaining Chapels and Chiesa Maggiore.

The chapel of St. Francis is open to the air, and contains nothing but an altar, and a modern fresco of the death of the saint.

Near it is the Holy Sepulchre, which is entered from a small cell in which there is a figure of the Magdalene, and from which the visitor must creep on hands and knees into the Sepulchre itself. The figure of Christ is not actually in the Sepulchre, but can be seen through a window opening into the contiguous chapel, where it is over the altar. The early writers say that there were also two angels by Gaudenzio (*statue di Gaudenzio divotissime*), but Bordiga says nothing of this. The upper part of this building was the abode of Bernardino Caimi and his successors until the year 1577.

As for the Holy Sepulchre itself it is low and dark, which I have no doubt is the reason why I have neglected it on the occasions of each of my two latest visits to Varallo, and thus failed to reach the adjacent Oratory, which Bordiga says was erected about the year 1702. Fassola and Torrotti wrote before this date, so that the angels mentioned by them as by

Gaudenzio may have been removed when the present fabric was erected. At any rate Bordiga speaks as though they were paintings by one Tarquinio Grassi and not sculptured figures at all. Torrotti says that visitors to the Holy Sepulchre used to burn candles, tapers, and torches, each one according to his purse or piety, and that they did this not so much to see with as to pray. "Here," he continues, "the great S. Carlo spent his evenings agreeably" (*spendeva gradevolmente le notti*). "Few," he concludes drily, and perhaps with a shade of the same quiet irony that led the Psalmist to say what he did about "one" day in certain courts, "can leave it without feeling devoutly thankful." About the candles Fassola says that there was a kind of automatic arrangement for getting them like that whereby we can now buy butter-scotch or matches at the railway stations, by dropping a penny into a slot. He says:—

"And as the figure of Christ can only be seen by the help of candles (for which reason all pilgrims whose means permit are accustomed to burn them, being naturally prompted thereto each one according to his faith)—by throwing money into a hole wherein the same candles lie, each pilgrim can be made quite comfortable and contented."

["Gettando il denaro per un buco dove stanno le mede-

sime candelette, commodamente può restar ogni divoto contento."]

"The mercies vouchsafed here," continues the same writer; "are innumerable—in all parts may be seen votive pictures both old and recent."

In the open cloister hard by is shown the wooden bed on which S. Carlo lay when he came to visit the Sacro Monte, and the stone which is said to be a fac-simile of the one rolled in front of the Holy Sepulchre itself. Many years ago I spent several weeks at Varallo sketching and painting on the Sacro Monte. A most excellent and lovable old priest, now doubtless long since dead, took rather a fancy to me, and used to implore me to become a Catholic. One day he took me up to this stone and spoke long and earnestly about it. What a marvellous miracle it was. There was the stone; I could see it for myself. What a dumb but eloquent testimony was it not offering; how could I account for such things? and more to the same effect, all said obviously in good faith, and with no idea save that of guiding me to the truth. I was powerless. I could not go into facts or arguments—I could not be obstinate without getting something like his consent—and he was instant in season and out of season in endeavouring to get mine. At last I could stand it no longer, and said, "My

dearest sir, I am the son of an English clergyman who is himself the son of another English clergyman; my father and mother are living. If you will tell me that I am to hold my father born in more than common sin, to have committed a crime in marrying my mother, and that I am to hold myself as one who ought never to have been born, then I will accept what you have said about that stone. Till then let me go my way, and you yours." He said not a word more, and never again approached the subject; the nearest he ever went to it was to say that he liked to see me sketching about the Sacro Monte, for it could do me nothing but good. I trust that I have done it no harm.

The chapel representing the Magdalene at the feet of the risen Christ has disappeared. It contained two statues only, and two prophets by Gaudenzio were painted outside on the wall. It stood "*Sotto un auanzo dei Portici antichi seguentemente al Sepolcro.*" It was probably a very early work.

Through an arch under the raised portico or arcaded gallery are three small ruined cells called now "Il Paradiso," and numbered 43, 44, and 45; of one of these Fassola tells us that it contained "many modern statues" by

Gaudenzio Sceti, and frescoes by Gianoli; they are all now mere wrecks. There is no important work by Gaudenzio Sceti remaining on the Sacro Monte, but there is a terra-cotta crucifix with a Virgin and a St. John by him, of no great value, in the church of S. Gaudenzio. What remains of his work on the Sacro Monte itself consists of statues of Sta. Anna and the Virgin as a child upon her lap in the chapel or cell numbered 43.

Chapel 44 need not detain us. What few remains of figures it contains are uninteresting and ruined.

I have already spoken of chapel No. 45, which once represented an entombment of the Madonna, as in all probability the oldest building, and as certainly containing the oldest, and by no means least interesting frescoes on the Sacro Monte. There is nothing inside the chapel except these frescoes, but outside it there are many scrawls, of which the earliest I have noticed is 1520—the supposed 1437 being certainly 1537. The writer of one of these scrawls has added the words "fuit hic" to his signature as John Van Eyck has done to the signature of his portrait of John Arnolfini and his wife. I have found this addition of "fuit hic" in a signature of a certain "Cardinalis

de al . . " who scratched his name " 1389 die 19 Mag " on a fresco to the left of the statue of S. Zenone in the church S. Zenone at Verona. On a fresco in the very interesting castle of Fénis in the valley of Aosta, to which I hope to return in another work, there is scratched " Hic sponsus cum sponsâ fuit 1790 25 May," the " May " being an English May; Jones and I thought the writer had begun to add " London " but had stopped. The " fuit hic," therefore, of John Van Eyck's signature should not be translated as we might be tempted to wish to translate it, " This was John Van Eyck."

Returning to the Sacro Monte, there remains only the Chiesa Vecchia, removed at the end of the last century to make room for the building that was till lately the " *casa degli esercizi*," or house in which the priests on the mountain performed their spiritual exercises. This is now let out in apartments during the summer, and is called the Casino. The old sacristy, now used as the *archivio* of the Sacro Monte, still remains, and contains a fresco by Lanini, that bears strong traces of the influence of his master Gaudenzio. Besides the impress of Christ's foot and the Assumption of the Virgin, the church contained an Annunciation by Gaudenzio and frescoes of St. Catherine and

St. Cecilia; the Cupola was also decorated by him. This work was undertaken in 1530, the greater angels being by Gaudenzio and the smaller by Lanini and Fermo Stella. These frescoes all perished when the church was pulled down.

The present Chiesa Maggiore was begun on the 9th of June 1614—D'Enrico's design having, so Bordiga says, been approved on the 1st of April in that year. Fassola says that in 1671 the only parts completed were the Choir and Cupola, the whole body of the church being left unfinished. Bordiga speaks of the church as having been finished in 1649, in which year, on the feast of the Birth of the Virgin, her image was taken from the old church and placed in the new, so when Fassola says "unfinished" he must refer to decoration only. The steps leading up to the church and the unfinished columns were erected in 1825 from designs by Marchese Don Luigi Cagnola, the architect of the Arco della Pace at Milan. It was ere long found that the stone selected was unreliable, so that all must be done over again; the work has, therefore, been suspended.

The Cupola is covered with about 140 modelled figures of angels, by Dionigi Bussola and Giambattista Volpino, Milanese sculptors,

who worked from designs made by Antonio Tempesta, a Florentine. They did this work about the year 1660. The brothers Montalti painted the frescoes, some more highly coloured groups being added by Antonio Cucchi of Milan in 1750.

In the crypt there is a sumptuous shrine containing the statue of the Madonna, said to have been made by St. Luke. This was erected in 1854, but on the night between the 4th and 5th of October in the same year the crown was stolen from the Virgin's head, and in the following year there was a solemn expiatory function, with festivities extending over three days, in order to celebrate the replacing of the stolen crown by a new one.

It cannot be said that any of the works of art now in the church are of considerable interest, but an important work of art was nevertheless produced in it at the celebration of the fourth centenary of the birth of Gaudenzio Ferrari, which was held in 1885. I refer to the Mass by Cagnoni, which was here performed for the first time, and which showed that the best traditions of old Italian ecclesiastical music are still occasionally adhered to. I was present at the production of the work, and have heard no modern Italian music that has

pleased me nearly as much. I ventured to ask the Maestro for the baton he had used in conducting it, and am proud to keep it as a memorial of a fine performance of a very fine work. The baton is several old newspapers neatly folded up and covered with silk.

CHAPTER XVI.

TABACHETTI'S WORK AT CREA.

I HAVE now to add a short account of what remains of Tabachetti's work at Crea, to the very inadequate description of his work at Varallo that has been given in some earlier chapters.

Crea is most easily approached from Casale, a large opulent commercial town upon the Po, that has already received the waters of the Dora Baltea, and though not yet swelled by the influx of the Ticino and Adda, has become a noble river. The town is built entirely on the plain, but the rich *colline* of the Monferrato district begin to rise immediately outside it, and continue in an endless series of vineclad slopes and village-capped hill-tops as far as the eye can reach. These *colline* are of exquisite beauty in themselves, and from their sides the most magnificent views of Piedmont and the Alps extend themselves in every direction. The people are a well-grown comely race, kind and

easy to get on with. Nothing could exceed the civility and comfort of the Hotel Rosa Rossa, the principal inn of the city. The town contains many picturesque bits, but in our short stay we did not see any very remarkable architectural features, and it does not form an exception to the rule that the eastern cities of Northern Italy are far more beautiful than the western. The churches, never one would imagine very striking, have been modernised and restored; nor were we told that there is any collection of pictures in the town which is likely to prove of interest.

The visitor should leave Casale by the 7.58 A.M. train on the line for Asti, and get out at Serralunga, the third station on the road. Here the sanctuary of Crea can be seen crowning a neighbouring *collina* with a chapel that has an arcaded gallery running round it, like some of those at Varese. Many other chapels testify to the former importance of the place; on the whole, however, the effect of the buildings cannot compare with that of the sanctuaries of Varallo and Varese. Taking a small carriage, which can always be had at the station (fare, to the sanctuary and back, eight francs), my friend, Mr. H. F. Jones, and myself ascended to Serralunga, finding the

views continually become more and more bewitching as we did so; soon after passing through Serralunga we reached the first chapel, and after another zigzag or two of road found ourselves in the large open court in front of the church. Here there is an inn, where any one who is inclined to do so could very well sleep. The piazza of the sanctuary is some two thousand feet above the sea, and the views are in some respects finer even than those from the Sacro Monte of Varese itself, inasmuch as we are looking towards the chain of the Alps, instead of away from them.

We have already seen that the sanctuary at Crea was begun about 1590, a hundred years or so later than the Sacro Monte of Varallo, and a dozen years earlier than that of Varese. The church attached to the convent, in which a few monks still remain, contains a chapel with good frescoes by Macrino D'Alba; they are somewhat damaged, and the light is so bad that if the *guardiano* of the sanctuary had not kindly lent us a candle we could not have seen them. It is not easy to understand how they can have been painted in such darkness; they are, however, the most important work of this painter that I have yet seen, and give a more favourable impression of him than

is likely to be formed elsewhere. Behind the high altar there is an oil picture also by Macrino d'Alba, signed as by the following couplet, which they may scan who can :

> "Hoc tibi, diva parens, posuit faciente Macrino
> Bladratensis opus Johes ille Jacobus. 1503."

The "Macrino," and "1503," are in red paint, the rest in black. The picture is so dark, and the view of it so much obstructed by the high altar, that it is impossible to see it well, but it seemed good. There is nothing else in the church, nor need the frescoes in the chapels containing the terra-cotta figures be considered ; we were told they were painted by Caccia, better known as Moncalvo, but we could see nothing in them to admire. The sole interest of the sanctuary—except, of course, the surpassing beauty of its position—is vested in what few remains of Tabachetti's work may be found there, and in the light that these may throw upon what he has left at Varallo.

All the work by Tabachetti now remaining at Crea consists of the Martyrdom of St. Eusebius chapel, almost all of which is by him, perhaps a figure or two in the Sposalizio chapel, but certainly not the figures of St. Joseph and the Virgin, which are not even ascribed to him,

the Virgin in the Annunciation chapel, some parts of the Judith and Holofernes, with which this subject is strangely backed; some few of the figures in the Marriage Feast at Cana chapel, and lastly, the wreck, which is all that remains, of the Assumption of the Virgin—commonly called "Il Paradiso." All the other chapels are either in a ruined state or have been renewed with modern figures during the last thirty years, and more especially during the last ten, at the instance, and, as we understood, at the expense, of the present Archbishop of Milan, who does his campagna here every summer.

The most important chapel is the Martyrdom of St. Eusebius, below the sanctuary itself. The saint is supposed to have been martyred in front of the church of St. Andrea at Vercelli. Some four or so of the figures to the spectator's right are modern restorations; among them, however, there is a child of extreme sweetness and beauty, which must certainly be by Tabachetti, looking up and clinging to the dress of its mother, who has been restored, and is as commonplace as the child is the reverse. There are two restored or rather entirely new priests close by the mother and child, and near these is another new figure—a girl immediately to the child's right; this is so absurdly bad

and out of proportion that it is not easy to understand how even the restorer can have allowed himself to make it. All the rest of the figures are by Tabachetti. A little behind the mother and child, but more to the spectator's right, and near to the wall of the chapel, there stands a boy one of whose lower eyelids is paralysed, and whose expression is one of fear and pain. This figure is so free alike from exaggeration or shortcoming, that it is hard to praise it too highly. Another figure in the background to the spectator's left—that of a goitred *crétin* who is handing stones to one of the stoners, has some of the same remarkably living look as is observable in the two already referred to; so also has another man in a green skull-cap, who is holding a small battle-axe and looking over the stoner's shoulders. Two of the stoners are very powerful figures. The man on horseback, in the background, appears to be a portrait probably of a benefactor. In spite of restoration, the work is still exceedingly impressive. The figures behind the saint act well together, the crowd is a crowd—a one in many, and a many in one—not, as with every one except Tabachetti who has tried to do a crowd in sculpture, a mere collection of units, that, whatever else they may be, are certainly

not crowding one another. The main drawback of the work is that the chapel is too small for the subject—a matter over which Tabachetti probably had no control.

It is with very great regret that I have been unable to photograph the work, but I was flatly refused permission to do so, though I applied through influential people to the Archbishop himself. No one need be at the trouble of going to see it who is not already impressed with a sense of Tabachetti's in some respects unrivalled genius, and who does not know how to take into consideration the evil influences of all sorts with which he was surrounded; those, however, who realise the magnitude of the task attempted, who will be at the pains of putting themselves, as far as may be, in the artist's place and judging of the work from the stand-point intended by him, and who will also in their imagination restore the damage which three centuries of exposure and restoration must assuredly have involved, will find themselves rewarded by a fuller comprehension of the work of a sculptor of the foremost rank than they can attain elsewhere except at Varallo itself.

I have said that some of the figures in the Sposalizio chapel, except Joseph and Mary, are

ascribed to Tabachetti. I do not know on what grounds the ascription rests; they have been restored,—clogged with shiny paint, and suffered every ill that could well befall them short of being broken up and carted away. Any one who sampled Tabachetti by these figures might well be disappointed; two or three may be by him, but hardly more. In spite, however, of all that may be justly urged against them, they are marked by the same attempt at concert and unity of purpose which goes so far to redeem individual comparative want of interest. In the background is a coloured bas-relief of Rachel and Jacob at the well and five camels.

In the Annunciation chapel the Virgin may well be, as she is said to be, by Tabachetti; she is a very beautiful figure, though not so fine as his Madonna and Child in the church of St. Gaudenzio at Varallo; she has been badly painted, and it is hard to say how much she has not suffered in consequence. Some parts of the story of Judith and Holofernes in the background are also good, but I do not think I should have seen Tabachetti in them unless I had been told that he was there.

The wreck of the chapel commonly called "Il Paradiso" crowns the hill, conspicuous for

many a mile in every direction, but on reaching the grating we found no trace of the figures that doubtless once covered the floor of the chapel. All that remained was a huge pendant of angels, cherubs, and saints, swarming as it were to the ceiling in an inextricable knot of arms, legs, wings, faces, and flowing drapery; two circles of saints, bishops, and others, who might be fitly placed in Paradise, rising one above the other high up the walls of the chapel —the lower circle full-length figures, and the other half-length; and above this a higher and richly coloured crown of musical saints and angels in good preservation. In passing I may say that this is the place where the Vecchietto ought to have come from, though it is not likely that he did so.

The pendant retains much of its original colour, and must once have been a gorgeous and fitting climax. Still, no one can do much with such a subject. To attempt it is to fly in the face of every canon by the observance of which art can alone give lasting pleasure. It is to crib, cabin, and confine, within the limits of well-defined sensation and perception, ideas that are only tolerable when left in the utmost indefiniteness consistent with thought at all. It is depressing to think that he who could

have left us portrait after portrait of all that was noblest and loveliest in the men and women of his age—who could give a life such as no one but himself, at any rate at that time, could give—should have had to spend months if not years upon a work that even when new can have been nothing better than a magnificent piece of stage decoration.

But of such miscarriages the kingdom of art is full. In the kingdom of art not only are many called and few chosen, but the few that do get chosen are for the most part chosen amiss, or are lavished in the infinite prodigality of nature. We flatter ourselves that among the kings and queens of art, music, and literature, or at any rate in the kingdom of the great dead, all wrongs shall be redressed, and patient merit shall take no more quips and scorns from the unworthy: there, if an able artist, as, we will say, F. H. Potter just dead, dies poor, neglected, and unable to fight his way through the ranks of men with not a tenth part of his genius, there, at any rate, shall right be done; there the mighty shall be put down from his seat, and the lowly and meek, if clever as well as good, shall meet his just reward. It is not so. There is no circle so exalted but the devil has got the run of it. As for the reputations

of the great dead, they are governed in the main by the chicane that obtains among the living; it is only after generations of flourishing imposture, that even approximate right gets done. Look at Raphael, see how he still reigns supreme over those who have the people's ears and purses at command. True, Guido, Guercino, and Domenichino have at last tumbled into the abyss, and we know very well that Raphael will ere long fall too, but Guido, Guercino, and Domenichino had a triumph of some two hundred years, during which none dared lift hand against them. Look again at that grossest of impostors—Bacon. Look at by far the greater number of the standard classical authors, painters, and musicians. All that can be said is that there is a *nisus* in the right direction which is not wholly in vain, and that though tens of thousands of men and women of genius are as dandelion seeds borne upon the air and perishing without visible result, yet there is here and there a seed that really does take root and spring upwards to be a plant on the whole more vigorous than that from which it sprung. Right and truth and justice, in their relation to human affairs, are as asymptotes which, though continually drawing nearer and nearer to the curve, can never

reach it but by a violation of all on which their own existence is founded.

As for the Assumption chapel, those who would see it even as a wreck should lose no time; it is in full process of restoration; it is swept and garnished for immediate possession by a gentleman whom we met on the road down, and whose facility of execution in making crucified Christs out of plaster of Paris is something almost incredible. His type of face was Jewish, and it struck both Jones and me that his proficiency must be in some degree due to hereditary practice. He showed us one crucifix which he had only begun at eight o'clock that morning, and by eleven was as good as finished. He told us he had done the brand new Disputa chapel and the Agony in the Garden with the beautiful blue light thrown all over Christ through deep French ultramarine glass, and he was now going on with the other chapels as fast as he could. He said they had no oven for baking terra-cotta figures; besides, terra-cotta was such a much slower material to work in; he could make a gross of apostles in plaster more quickly than a single set of twelve in terra-cotta, and the effect was just as good when painted; so plaster of Paris and unrivalled facility of execution are to have

everything their own way. Already what I can only call a shoddy bishop or pope or two, I forget which, have got in among the circle of Tabachetti's saints and angels that still remains. These are many of them portraits full of serious dignity and unspotted by the world of *barocco* with which Tabachetti was surrounded. At the present moment they have been partly scraped and show as terra-cotta; no doubt they have suffered not a little in the scraping and will do so still further when they are repainted, but there is no help for it. Great works of art have got to die like everything else.

And, after all, it is as well they should, lest they come to weigh us down too heavily. Why should a man live too long after he is dead? For a while, yes, if he has done good service in his generation, give him a new lease of life in the hearts and memories of his successors, but do not let even the most eminent be too exacting; do not let them linger on as nonagenarians when their strength is now become but labour and sorrow. We have statutes of mortmain to restrain the dead hand from entering in among the living—why not a statute of limitations or "a fixed period" as against reputations and works of art—say a

thousand years or so—behind which time we will resolutely refuse to go, except in rare cases by acclamation of the civilised world? How is it to end if we go on at our present rate, with huge geological formations of art and book middens accreting in every city of Europe? Who is to see them, who even to catalogue them? Remember the Malthusian doctrine, and that the mind breeds in even more rapid geometrical ratio than the body. With such a surfeit of art and science the mind palls and longs to be relieved from both. As the true life which a man lives is not in that consciousness in the midst of which the thing he calls "himself" sits and the din and roar of which confuse and deafen him, but in the life he lives in others, so the true life a man's work should live after his death is not in the mouths but in the lives of those that follow him; in these it may live while the world lasts, as his lives who invented the wheel or arch, but let it live in the use which passeth all praise or thanks or even understanding, and let the story die after a certain time as all things else must do.

Perhaps; but at any rate let us give them decent burial. Crush the wounded beetle if you will, but do not try to mend it. I am glad

to have seen the remains of the Assumption chapel while they are in their present state, but am not sure whether I would not rather see them destroyed at once, than meet the fate of restoration that is in store for them. At the same time I am confident that no more competent restorer than the able and eminent sculptor who has the work in hand is at all likely to be found. My complaint is not against him, but against the utter hopelessness of the task. I would again urge those who may be induced to take an interest in Tabachetti's work to lose no time in going to see what still remains of it at Crea.

Last January I paid a second visit to Crea; and finding a scaffolding up, was able to get on a level with the circle of full-length figures. They were still unpainted, the terra-cotta figures showing as terra-cotta and the plaster of Paris white. When they are all repainted the visitor will find it less easy to say which are new figures and which old. I will therefore say that of the lower circle of twenty full-length figures the only two entirely new figures are the sixth to the left of the door on entering, which represents a man holding an open book by his left hand and resting it on his thigh, and the sixth figure to the right of the door on

entering. There are several unimportant restorations of details of dress, feet, and clouds; the rest of the work in this circle is all by Tabachetti.

In the circle of busts and half-length figures, the first new work to the left of the door on entering is a figure that holds a lamb, the two half-length figures that come next in sequence are also new—the second of these is a nun holding a little temple. The second upper choir of angels and saints is still in its original [?] colour and seems to have been little touched, as also the pendant.

The chapel containing the Marriage Feast at Cana has been much restored and badly repainted. Most of the figures are very poor, but some, and especially a waiter with his hair parted down the middle, who is offering a hare (not cut up) to a guest who seems to have had too much already, are very good indeed. I find it difficult to think that this waiter can be by any one but Tabachetti. The guitar-player is good, or rather was good before he was repainted —so is a lady near him, so are some of the waiters at the other end, and so are the bride and bridegroom; at any rate they are life-like and effective as seen from outside, but the chapel has suffered much from restoration.

There is one other chapel at Crea which may be by Tabachetti though I do not know that it is ascribed to him, I mean the one containing figures of the founder and his wife, a little below the main piazza. The shepherds and sheep to the left are probably not by Tabachetti, but the lady is a well-modelled figure. Both she, however, and her husband have been so cruelly clogged with new paint that it is hard to form an opinion about them.

On the piazza itself is a chapel representing the Birth of the Virgin which is also pleasing. It is not always easy for us English to tell the Birth of the Virgin from the Nativity, and it may help the reader to distinguish these subjects readily if he will bear in mind, that at the Birth of the Virgin the baby is always going to be washed—which never happens at the Nativity; this, and that the Virgin's mother is almost invariably to have an egg, and generally a good deal more, whereas the Virgin never has anything to eat or drink. The Virgin's mother always wants keeping up. Gaudenzio Ferrari has a Birth of the Virgin in the Church of S. Cristoforo at Vercelli. The Virgin's mother is eating one egg with a spoon, and there is another coming in on a tray, which I think is to be beaten up in wine. Something

more substantial to follow is coming in on a hot plate with a cover over it and a napkin. The baby is to be washed of course, and the kind old head nurse is putting her hand in the bath, while the under nurse pours in the hot water, to make sure that the temperature is exactly right. It is to be just nicely loo-warm. The bath itself is certainly a very little one; it will hold about a pint and a half, but medieval washing apparatus did run rather small, and Gaudenzio was not going to waste more of his precious space than he could help upon so uninteresting an object as a bath; in actual life the bath was doubtless larger. The under-under nurse is warming a towel, which will be nicely ready when the bath is over. Joachim appears to have been in very easy circumstances, and the arrangements could hardly be more commodious even though the event had taken place at a certain well-known establishment in the Marylebone Road.

At Milan, in a work that I only know by Pianazzi's engraving, there are two eggs coming in on a tray, and they too, I should say, are to be beaten up in wine. The under nurse is again filling a very little bath with warm water, and the head nurse is trying the temperature with her hand. There is no room for the warming

of the towel, but there is no question that the towel is being warmed just out of the picture on the left hand. Here, at Crea, the attendant is giving the Virgin's mother a plain boiled egg, and has a spoon in her hand with which she is going to crack it. The Virgin's mother is frowning and motioning it away; she is quite as well as can be expected; still she does not feel equal to taking solid food, and the nurse is saying, "Do try, ma'am, just one little spoonful, the doctor said you was to have it, ma'am." In the smaller picture by Carpaccio at Bergamo she is again to have an egg; in the larger she is to have some broth now, but a servant can be seen in the kitchen plucking a fowl for dear life, so probably the larger picture refers to a day or two later than the earlier.

The only other thing that struck us at Crea was the Virgin in the Presentation chapel. She is so much too small that one feels as though there must be some explanation that is not obvious. She is not more than 2 ft. 6 in. high, while the High Priest, and Joachim and St. Anne are all life-sized. The Chief Priest is holding up his hands, and seems a good deal surprised, as though he were saying—"Well, my dear, I must say you are the very smallest Virgin that I ever had presented to me during

the whole course of my incumbency." Joachim and St. Anne seem very much distressed, and Joachim appears to be saying, "It is not our fault; I assure you, sir, we have done everything in our power. She has had plenty of nourishment." There must be some explanation of the diminutive size of the figure that is not apparent.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

RETURNING to Varallo, in the town itself the most important work is the fresco by Gaudenzio Ferrari in the church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie, already several times referred to. The reader will find it fully described in the pages of Colombo ; moreover, in January last Signor Pizetta took excellent negatives of all the compartments into which the work is divided, and I learn that he has sent impressions—put together so as to give a very good idea of the work—to the Italian Exhibition that will open as these pages leave my hands. I have myself also sent to the same Exhibition a few unreduced impressions from the negatives used in the illustrations that face earlier pages : these will give the reader a more correct impression of the works from which they are taken than he can get from the reduction. I do not yet know whether they will be hung.

The fresco of Sta. Petronilla painted by Gau-

denzio by moonlight on a chapel just outside the town, is now little more than a wreck.

There are a few works by Gaudenzio of no great importance in the Pinacoteca of the Museum; a few frescoes by Lanini, one or two drawings by Tanzio D'Enrico, which show that he was a well-trained draughtsman; two pictures by him, *barocco* in character, but not without power, and other works of more or less interest, are also in the Pinacoteca.

In the parish church of S. Gaudenzio, behind the altar, there is an exceedingly fine Ancona by Gaudenzio, to which I have already referred. Over an altar in the north transept, but for the most part hidden behind a painted *tela*, is Tabachetti's very beautiful Madonna del Rosario, which the visitor should ask the Sacristan to show him; and last, but hardly least, there is a Madonna by Dedomenici of Rossa—a village higher up the Valsesia—painted on linen, in the chapel dedicated to St. Joseph.

I referred to this last-named work in my book "Alps and Sanctuaries" (pp. 177, &c.), and have seen no reason to modify the opinion I then expressed. I may repeat that about twenty years ago I was much struck with the painting and could not make out its strong

and evidently unaffected medieval feeling, yet modernness at the same time. On consulting the Sacristan I learned that Dedomenici had died about 1840. He added that the extraordinary thing was that Dedomenici had never studied painting, and had never travelled out of the Valsesia; that he had, in fact, acquired his art by doing rather than by learning how to do.

This, as it appeared to me, explained his excellence. As a general rule the more people study how to do things the more hopelessly academic they become. Learning how to say ends soon in having nothing to say. Learning how to paint, in having nothing that one so longs to paint as to be unable to keep one's hands off it. It gratifies the lust of doing sufficiently to appease it, and then kills it. Learning how to write music, ends in the dreary symphonies, operas, cantatas, and oratorios which it seems are all that modern composers can give us. The only way to study an art is to begin at once with doing something that one wants very badly to do, and doing it—even though it be only very badly. Study, of course, but synchronously—letting the work be its own exercises.

If a man defers doing till he knows how to

do, when is the hunting the *ignis fatuus* of a perfect manner to end, and the actual work that he is to leave behind him to begin? I know nothing so deadening, as a long course of preliminary study in any art, and nothing so living as work plunged into at once by one who is studying hard—over it, rather than in preparation for it. Jones talking with me once on this subject, and about *agape* as against *gnosis* in art, said, "Oh that men should put an enemy into their brains to steal away their hearts." At any rate he and I have written "Narcissus" on these principles, and are not without hope that what it has lost in erudition it may have gained in freshness. I have, however, dealt with the question of how to study painting more at length in the chapter on the Decline of Italian art in "Alps and Sanctuaries."

I said I would return to the chapel of Loreto a little way out of Varallo on the road to Novara. This work has a lunette which is generally, and I suppose correctly, ascribed to Gaudenzio. It is covered with frescoes not of extraordinary merit, but still interesting, and the chapel itself is extremely beautiful. I had intended dwelling upon it at greater length, but find that my space will not allow me to do

so, though I shall hope to describe it more fully in another work on Italy, for which I have many notes that I have been unable to use here.

And now to conclude. A friend once said to me on the Sacro Monte, "How is it that they have no chapel of the Descent of the Holy Spirit?" I answered that the work of Gaudenzio Ferrari, Tabachetti, D'Enrico, and Paracca was a more potent witness to, and fitter temple for, the Holy Spirit, than any that the hands even of these men could have made for it expressly. For that there is a Holy Spirit, and that it does descend on those that diligently seek it, who can for a moment question? A man may speak lightly of the Father and it shall be forgiven him; he may speak lightly of the Son and it shall be forgiven him; but woe to him if he speak lightly of that Divine Spirit, inspiration of which alone it is that makes a work of art either true or permanently desirable.

Of the letter in which the Sacro Monte is written, I have at times in the preceding pages spoken lightly enough. Who in these days but the advocates whose paid profession it is to maintain the existing order, and those whom custom and vested interests hold enthralled,

accepts the letter of Christianity more than he accepts the letter of Oriental exaggerated phraseology? If three days and three nights means in reality only thirty-six hours, so should full fifty per cent. be deducted wherever else seems necessary, and "dead" be read as "very nearly dead," and "the Son of God" as "rarely perfect man." Who, on the other hand, that need be reckoned with, denies the eternal underlying verity that there is an omnipresent unknown something for which Mind, Spirit, or God, is, as Professor Mivart has well said, "the least misleading" expression? Who doubts that this Mind or God is immanent throughout the whole universe, sustaining it, guiding it, living in it, he in it and it in him? I heard of one not long since who said he had been an atheist this ten years—and added, "thank God." Who, again, doubts that the spirit of self-sacrifice for a noble end is lovelier and brings more peace at the last than one of self-seeking and self-indulgence? And who doubts that of the two great enemies both to religion and science referred to in the passage I have taken for my motto, "the too much" is even more dangerous than "the too little"?

I, and those who think as I do, would see the letter whether of science or of Christianity made

less of, and the spirit more. Slowly, but very slowly—far, as it seems to our impatience, too slowly—things move in this direction. See how even the Church of Rome, and indeed all churches, are dropping miracles that they once held proper objects of faith and adoration. The Sacro Monte is now singularly free from all that we Protestants are apt to call superstition. The miracles and graces so freely dealt in by Fassola and Torrotti find no place in the more recent handbooks. The Ex Votos and images in wax and silver with which each chapel formerly abounded have long disappeared, and the sacred drama is told with almost as close an adherence to the facts recorded in the Gospels, as though the whole had been done by Protestant workmen. Where is the impress of Christ's footprint now? carted away or thrown into a lumber room as a child's toy that has been outgrown—so surely as has been often said do the famous words "*E pur si muove*" apply to the Church herself, as well as to that world whose movement she so strenuously denied.

The same thing is happening here among ourselves. As the good churchmen at Varallo have thrown away their Flemish dancer, their footprint of the Saviour, and their Virgins that box thieves' ears and persist in turning round

and smiling even after they have been asked not to do so, so we, by the mouths of our Bishops, are flinging away our Genesis, our Exodus, and I know not how much more. In the *Nineteenth Century* for last December the Bishop of Carlisle says that the account of Creation given in the Book of Genesis "does not pretend to be historical in any ordinary sense"—or, in other words, that it does not pretend to be historical, or true, at all. Surely this is rather a startling jettison. The Bishop goes on to say that "the account of the flood is a very precious tradition full of valuable teaching," and is, he doubts not, a record of some great event that actually occurred; "but," he continues, "I confess that until Bishop Colenso brought his arithmetic to bear upon it and some other portions of Old Testament history, I was quite [why "quite?"] under the impression that the common sense of Christians abstained from criticising this ancient record by the canons applicable to ordinary history." This was not my own impression, but the Bishop's is doubtless more accurate. If things, however, go on at this rate, a hundred years hence we shall have a Bishop writing to the *Twentieth Century* that till X, Y or Z brought their canons of historical criticism to bear on

the Resurrection itself, he was "quite" under the impression that the common sense of Christians abstained from criticising this ancient record by the canons applicable to ordinary history. The Bishop appeals, and rightly, to common sense. This is of all courts the safest and rightest to abide by, but it must not be forgotten that the common sense of one generation is not that of the next, and that the modification with which common sense descends cannot be effected, however gently we may try to do so, without some disturbance of the pre-existing common sense, and some reversal of its decrees.

That the letter of the coming faith will be greatly truer than that of the many that have preceded it I for one do not believe. Let us have no more "Lo heres" and "Lo theres" in this respect. I would as soon have a winking Madonna or a forged decretal, as the doubtful experiments or garbled articles which the high priests of modern science are applauded with one voice for trying to palm off upon their devotees; and I should look as hopefully for good result from a new monastery, as from a new school of art, college of music, or scientific institution. Whatever faith or science the world at large bows down to will in its letter be tainted

with the world that worships it. Whoever clings to the spirit that underlies all the science obtaining among civilised peoples will assuredly find that he cannot serve God and Mammon. The true Christ ever brings a sword on earth as well as peace, and if he maketh men to be of one mind in an house, he divideth a house no less surely. The way will be straight in the future as in the past. All that can be hoped for is that it may perhaps become a trifle more easy through the work of the just men made perfect through suffering that have gone before, and that he who in bygone ages would have been burnt will now be only scouted.

I have in the last few foregoing pages been trenching on somewhat dangerous ground, but who can leave such a work as the Sacro Monte without being led to trench on this ground, and who that trenches upon it can fail to better understand the lesson of the Sacro Monte itself? I am aware, however, that I have said enough if not too much, and will return to the note struck at the beginning of my work—namely, that I have endeavoured to stimulate study of the great works on the Sacro Monte rather than to write the full account of them which their importance merits. At the same time I must admit that I have had great advan-

tages. Not one single previous writer had ever seen an earlier work than that of Fassola, published in 1670 [1], whereas I have had before me one that appeared in 1586 [7]. I had written the greater part of my book before last Christmas, and going out to Varallo at the end of December to verify and reconsider it on the spot, found myself forced over and over again to alter what I had written, in consequence of the new light given me by the 1586 [7] and 1590 [1] editions of Caccia. It is with profound regret that though I have continued to search for the 1565 and 1576 editions up to the very last moment that these sheets leave my hands, my search has been fruitless.

Over and above the advantage of having had even the later Caccia before me, I have seen Cav. Aless. Godio's "Cronaca di Crea," which no previous writer had done, inasmuch as this work has been only very lately published. Moreover, when I was at Varallo, it being known that I was writing on the Sacro Monte, every one helped me, and so many gave me such important and interesting information that I found my labour a very light and pleasant one. Especially must I acknowledge my profound obligations to Signor Dionigi Negri, town clerk of Varallo, to Signor Galloni the present director

of the Sacro Monte, to Cav. Prof. Antonini and his son, Signori Arienta and Tonetti, and to many other kind friends whom if I were to begin to name I must name half the town of Varallo. With such advantages I am well aware that the work should be greatly better than it is; if, however, it shall prove that I have succeeded in calling the attention of abler writers to Varallo, and if these find the present work of any, however small, assistance to them, I shall hold that I have been justified in publishing it. In the full hope that this may turn out to be the case, I now leave the book to the generous consideration and forbearance of the reader.

INDEX.

ACADEMICISM, its deadening influence, 261
Academy Exhibition, he had better stick to, 76
Action, violent, difficulty of rendering in sculpture, 81
Adam and Eve, their transformation into Roman soldiers, 61
—— the old chapel on site of present Crowning with Thorns, 120, 184
—— the figures how transformed, 120, 121
Advocates, who but the, whose paid profession, &c., 263
Agape, the soul of true art, 8
—— and *gnosis* in art, 262
Alagna, the brothers D'Enrico came from, 105
Albertino, Giambattista, inventory, 3
Animals, better in the Temptation than in the Adam and Eve chapel, 119
Annunciation, Miraculous Madonna in this chapel, 127
Antonini, Cav. Prof., 103, 121, 122, 167, 190, 215, 216, 218, 220, 270
Arienta, G., 11, 12, 14, 54, 92, 120, 134, 149, 150, 184, 226, 270
Arona, G. Ferrari's ancona at, 93
Art, *Agape* not *gnosis* the soul of, 8, 262
—— generally either growing or declining, 219
—— the kingdom of, full of miscarriages, 248
—— great works of must die, 251
—— a statute of mortmain wanted for, 252
—— the only way to study an, 261
Ascension, early chapel of the, and wooden figure over fountain, 54
—— and present Temptation chapel, 54
Asymptotes, Right and Truth are as, 249
Atheist, "I've been a, thank God," 264
Automatic arrangement for buying candles, 231

BACKGROUND, fresco, not part of the initial scheme, 57, but gradually evolved, 58
—— generally made to the terra-cotta figures, not *vice versâ*, 178
Bacon, the grossest of impostors, 249
Baked, the figures were, down in the town, 191
Bankruptcy, in view of admitted, we accept convention, 82
Bargnola, of Valsolda, or Paracca, 144, &c. (*See* Preface.)
Bartoli on Tabachetti, 100
Baton, how I asked for Cagnoni's, 237
Battista, Custode, at Sacro Monte, 164
Battle, a, near Borgo Sesia, 29
Bellini, portraits of Gio. and Gentile, 7
—— Gio. stands higher than Gaud. Ferrari, 20
Bernardino de' Conti, his drawing of Stefano Scotto, 205
Birdlime, boys steal the coppers with, 125
Birth of the Virgin, and the Nativity, 255
Blenheim, the Raphael, 5
Boccioloni, C., *Sindaco* of Varallo, 209
Bodley, Thomas, and Haydocke's translation of Lomazzo, 21
Book, treating a mountain like a, 70
Books, post-dating late autumn, 2, 45, 178, 179

Book-middens, huge geological formations of, &c., 252
Borromeo, S. Carlo, his first visit to Varallo, 64
—— second founder of the Sacro Monte, 64
—— second visit to Varallo, 65
—— death announced by an angel, 65
Box on the ear, given to a thief by the Virgin, 127
Burlazzi, Prof., 75, 76, 119

CACCIA—his work on the Sacro Monte, 1, 2
—— the various editions of, 45, 61, 63
Cagnoni's Mass for the quatercentenary of Gaudenzio Ferrari, 237
Caimi, B., inscription on his grave, 12, 44
—— conveyances to, 11, 12, 40, &c.
—— arrives at Varallo, 41
Candles, automatic arrangement for buying, 231
Capture chapel, the original, where placed, 130
—— the old, date of the change from, 168
Carestia, Ab. Cav., of Riva Valdobbia, 45
Carlisle, the Bishop of, his somewhat startling jettison, 266
Casale, Pietro, waiter at Rosa Rossa, 33, 240
Centesimo, one on floor of Ecce Homo chapel, 125
Ceriani, Sac. Ant., 2
Character, towns an expression of, 39
Children, to, all great things happened long ago, 83
Christ, figures perhaps originally intended for, 171, 172
—— portrait of, 179, 180
Christ's face, said to become smaller and smaller, 178
Christie, old, the model, 206
Cicognara, does not mention Tabachetti, G. Ferrari, D'Enrico, nor any Valsesian sculpture, 99
Ciocc' anch' anc'uei, 173
Cities express character, 39
Cocks, challenging cocks on crucifixes, 174
Colma, the, "root" over, 32
—— like "Verdi Prati," 34
Colombo, his life of Gaudenzio Ferrari, 90, &c., and *passim*
Common sense, the rightest court to appeal to, 267
—— descends with modification, 267
Consciousness, the din and roar of our, deafens us, 252
Convention, must early supersede adherence to nature, 82
Conveyances to the "Minori osservanti" of Dec. 21, 1486, and April 14, 1493, 11, 12, 42
Coppers on floors of chapels, boys steal the, 125
Corelli, Anangelo, 219
Corone, ed altri instromenti, &c., 118
—— *Le adoperano per pregare*, 118
Costume, modern, why impossible, in an Epic work, 83, 85
Council of bishops held in the Val Rassa, 27
Courts, "a day in thy," &c., 231
Crea, 239, &c.
Crib, cabin, and confine ideas within the limits, &c., 247
Cross on the *Strada della Madonna*, 115
Crowning with Thorns chapel has a few waxen images, 124
Crucifixions, "and there have been in both," 49
Cultivated eye, 5, 6
Culture, art tips from our leading journals of, 78

DANCER, Flemish, miracle of the, 185
Darwin, C., Boehm's statue of, 159
Dead, the reputations of the great, 249
Death, and sleep easy to render, 130
Declining, or growing, all arts are generally, 219
Dedomenici, da Rossa, his *tela* in the church of S. Gaudenzio, 260
D'Enrico, G., designer of many of the present chapels, 66, 67
—— challenges a comparison with Tabachetti that he will not bear, 73
—— his Nailing to Cross, and Tabachetti's Calvary, 81
—— and Giacomo Ferro, and supers, 87, 88
—— not known to have studied under Tabachetti, 107
—— *procès-verbal* showing his rate of payment, 109, 110; died unmarried, 110
—— shows his figures off, 114

D'Enrico, Antonio, 106
—— Melchiorre, 106
Devil, the, has the run even of the holy places of art, &c., 248
Die, great works of art must, 251
Dinant, Tabachetti came from, 104
Domenichino, had a long triumph, 249
Donoghue, F. M., 100

Ecce Homo chapel, one centesimo left on floor of, 125
Egg, the general who was eating an, 29, 30
—— the Virgin's mother is always to have an, 255–257
Emigrators, the Valsesians great, 29
Endemic, art, more in eastern than western Italy, 38, &c.
Entombment chapel, no fresco background to, 57
Eusebius, St., his martyrdom, by Tabachetti, 243, &c.
E-whew, 220
Execution near Loreto. 35
Eyck, John Van, and "fuit hic" 234, 235

FACE, Christ's said to become smaller and smaller, 178
Farinetti, Cav. Don, 105
Fassola di S. Maiolo, Count, his child carried off by a wolf, 28
—— Count Gio. Bat. di S. Maiolo, account of, 44, &c.
—— his work post-dated by a year, 45
Ferrari, Gaudenzio, his original journey to Calvary chapel, 13, 14
—— Raphael's superior, 15
—— never studied under Raphael, 15
—— his devils not satisfactory, 16
—— not wholly free from mannerism, 20
—— Lanzi on, 17, 18
—— Lomazzo, on, 18–21
—— said all painters were fond of stealing, 20
—— greater than Bern. Luini, but below G. Bellini, Giotto, and Giorgione, 20
—— his works in and about the S. Francesco chapel, 58, 59
—— his Crucifixion chapel, scrawls on the frescoes, 59, 60
—— probably developed the conception of the Sacro Monte scheme, 70
Ferrari, Gaudenzio, his Crucifixion the most daringly ambitious work, &c., 77
—— what was good enough for him is so for us, 79
—— his life and principal works, 90, &c.
—— his Crucifixion chapel, date of, 94
—— probable return to Varallo, 97
—— violent dissensions between the town and Sacro Monte, 97
—— sold his house and left Varallo for Milan, 98
—— Signor Morelli on, 98
—— is what Raphael is said to be, 98
—— like Gio. Bellini, a steady grower, 133
—— the only man who combined painting and sculpture in one design, 178
—— his portraits of Stefano Scotto, and of Leonardo da Vinci, 189, 204
—— his Crucifixion chapel the most daring among Italian works of art, 197
—— the same but stronger, 212
—— had a tendency to get his figures below life size, 212
—— has not suffered much from repainting, 228
—— the quatercentenary of his birth, and Cagnoni's mass, 237
—— Margherita, 93, 96
—— Gerolamo, 93, 96
—— his death, 97
Ferro, Giacomo, G. D'Enrico's assistant, 67
—— and D'Enrico, and supers, 88
—— D'Enrico's partner and heir, 107–112
Fiamenghino, Il, and Rovere, or Rossetti, 149, &c.
Fifty per cent. to be deducted from many Oriental expressions, 264
Figures, many transformed and shifted, 61
Five, four often taken for, in old writing, 53
Flemish dancer, miracle of the, 185
Footprint, impression of Christ's, 222
—— where is Christ's now? 265
Forged decretal, a, 267
Fortresses, spiritual frontier, 52
Four, five often taken for, in old writing, 53
Fresco at Mantegna (Virgin and married couple), 36

Fresco, St. Abbondio at Como, (striped counterpane), 36
—— St. Mark's at Varallo (cow pinning a wolf), 36
—— background, not part of the initial scheme, 57
—— outside original Entombment chapel, 57, 58
—— the, began outside the chapels, 70
—— generally done after the sculptured work, not before, 178
"Fuit hic," examples of the use of this form, 234, 235
Furnace, the, where the figures were baked, 191

GABLE, stepped, house with a, in fresco background, 162
Galloni, P., his 'Uomini e Fatti,' 3, 11, 40, 44, 45, 47, 52, 53, 54, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 269
Garbled article, a, 267
German not spoken lower down the valley formerly than now, 30
—— blood and language in the Val Sesia, 51
Giotto and Giorgione, 20
Giussano, his account of S. Carlo at Varallo, 64
Gnosis, not, but *agape*, the soul of true art, 8, 262
Godio, Cav. Ales., his Cronaca di Crea, 104, 269
Gogin, C., 177
Grazie, Fassola on, 123
Gross, he could make a gross of Apostles, 250
Grosvenor Exhibition, he had better stick to, 76
Growing, or declining, all arts are generally, 219
Guercino had a long triumph, but has fallen, 249
Guido had a long triumph, 249

HAMLET, if the part is totally excised, 81
Handel, "Verdi Prati" like the Colma, 35
—— said the last word in music, 220
Harlech, extract from visitors' book, 33, 34
Haydocke, Rich., his translation of Lomazzo dedicated to Bodley, 21
Hieroglyphics, two in the Massacre chapel, 151
Holy Sepulchre, stone resembling the one that covered the, 43, 232
Holy Spirit, no chapel of Descent of the, 263
—— woe to him who speaks lightly of the, 263
Horse-hair on the figures, 13, 75
Horses valued at three figures, 109
—— Cesare Maggi's horse genuflecting, 117
Hystero-epilepsy, figure of boy in fit of, 160

IDEALISM, time and incompetency alike turn realism into, 83, 85, 86
Incompetence, saved early masters from a good deal, 85, 86
Indefiniteness, ideas that are only tolerable when left in, &c., 247
Innocent X., and miracle in Nativity chapel, 140
Inventory, Albertino's, 3
Irony, quiet, of the Psalmist, 231
Irving, even though the Hamlet be, 81

JERUSALEM, resemblances to Varallo, 26, 49
Jones, H. Festing, on the crying of Gaudenzio's angels, 16
—— and chip from cross, on ascent of Sacro Monte, 115
—— his songs exceedingly fine, 219
—— "Oh, that men should put an enemy," &c., 262

KING, the Rev. S. W., his "Italian Valleys," &c., 10
—— does not mention Tabachetti, 17, 99
Kugler, Sir A. H. Layard's edition of, 4-9

LANINI, frescoes in the *Cena* chapel, now destroyed, 162
—— frescoes by, in old Capture chapel, 169
Lanzi on G. Ferrari, 17, 18
Layard, Sir A. H., thinks Tabachetti was a painter and decorator, 4
—— his edition of Kugler, 4-9
—— calls the figures of the Sacro Monte repugnant to a "cultivated eye," 5
—— and portraits of Giovanni and Gentile Bellini, 7
—— on "excellence in art," 8
Leonardo da Vinci, Gaudenzio Ferrari's portrait of, 207-209
—— Gaudenzio did not like him, 208

"Lo heres," let us have no more, 267
"Lord," all true art must be done "to the," 9
Loreto, the Madonna of, 35, 262
Losers of anything, and Flight into Egypt chapel, 143
Lübke does not mention Tabachetti, nor any Valsesian sculpture, 99
Luini, Bernardino, not much below Gaudenzio Ferrari, 99
Luini, the Varallese painter of this name, 36, 37

MADAMA REALE, and the battle of Borgosesia, 30
Madonna Strada della, 114
—— cross on the, 115
Maggi, Cesare, his horse genuflecting, 117
Magi chapel, interception of funds, 135
Mantegna, fresco at, apparition of Virgin to a gentleman and lady, 35, 36
Margate, Varallo like, 31
Marylebone Road, Queen Charlotte lying-in hospital in the, 256
Melchizedek, the Vecchietto a, 74
Michael Angelo, over subtle, 72
—— not so good a man all round as Tabachetti, 72, 73, 81
Middens, huge geological formations of art and book, 252
Miel, Giovanni, never worked on the Sacro Monte, 5
—— how mistaken for Rovere, 150
Miracle of the Virgin boxing the thief's ears, 127
—— of the young man who was carrying a treasure to Varallo, 127, 128
—— in the Nativity chapel on elevation of Innocent X., 140
—— of the Flemish dancer, 185
Miracles disappearing slowly but surely even from the Church of Rome, 265
Modern costumes, why always impossible in an epic work, 83
—— all become ultimately interesting, 85
Monmouth and Macedon not more like than Jerusalem and Varallo, 49
Montrigone, D'Enrico and Ferro's work at, 106, 107
Mountain, taking a, and illustrating, 70
Much, the too, 264
Museum at Varallo, old votive pictures in the, 124

NAGLER on Tabachetti, 100, 101
"Narcissus," Jones's and my oratorio, 262
Nativity and birth of the Virgin, 255
Negri, Dionigi, 215, 269
Nest-eggs, a few coppers left on the ground as, 125
Nisus, there is a, in the right direction, 249

οἷοι νὺν βρότοι εἰσι, 83
Oriental, "more than he accepts the letter of Oriental exaggeration," 264
Orta, Sacro Monte at, not good, 71, 72
—— people judge Varallo by, 71
Outside the chapels, frescoes began, 70

PAINTING and sculpture, turning on the full strength of both, 69, 77
—— integral parts of one design, 79
Panesia, the blessed Virgin, 27
Paracca, or Bargnola, 145. (*See* Preface.)
Passero solitario, the, 42
Pellegrini, called Tibaldi, his plan of the Sacro Monte, 2, 3
—— his intended reconstruction of the Sacro Monte, 66
Perkins does not mention Tabachetti, nor any Valsesian sculpture, 99
Pickle the spirit, &c., 211
Pietro, the waiter at Rosa Rossa, 33
Pilato, Palazzo di, probably designed by G. D'Enrico, 66, 67
Pin, with a brush like the point of a, 85
Pit, these pieces were being played to the, 84
Pizetta, "*questo non sacrifica*," 112, 160
—— his photographs of the Sta. Maria delle Grazie frescoes, 259
Plaster of Paris, an apostle of, 250
Poetry better than prose, because less of it in a page, 63
Portraiture, why impossible on a large scale on Sacro Monte, 89
Post-dating late autumn books, 2, 45, 178, 179
Potter, the late F. H., 248
Pray, "do the English ever?" 118
Prince of painters, no one the, 98

Procès-verbal, showing the rate at which the sculptors were paid, 109, 110
Prose, its disadvantage as compared with poetry, 63
Providing Providence with an abode, 41
Psalmist, quiet irony of the, 231
Purcell, Henry, 219

RAPHAEL, Blenheim, the, 5
—— Gaudenzio never studied under, 15
—— Gaudenzio his superior, 15
—— will not stand comparison with Gaudenzio Ferrari, 98
—— will ere long come down, 249
Real drapery always means that the figure has been cut about, 120
Realism in great measure impossible for Sacro Monte artists, 83, 85, 86
—— we accept it with avidity when we can get it, 88
Reformation, the, and Sacro Monte, 50
—— stamped out in many subalpine valleys, but not in all, 50
Reputations of the great dead, 249
Rocks rarely well done by early masters, 136
—— Gaudenzio Ferrari's, 136
"Root," a remarkable, 32
Rosa Rossa, hotel at Casale, 33, 240
Rossetti, M. Ang., and the Massacre chapel, 145. (*See* Preface.)
Rossetti, or Rovere, the brothers, 149, &c.
Rossi, Joseph, waiter, 33
Rovere, or Rossetti, the brothers, 149

Sacrifica, questo niente, 112
Sacro Monte, works on, begun sooner than the received date, 12
—— miracles preceding its foundation, 41, 42, 48
—— the, intended as a spiritual frontier fortress, 50
—— history, two main periods, 52
—— chapel No. 45 the earliest building on the, 53
—— several early chapels now undiscoverable, 54–56
—— chapels completed by 1550–86, 61, 62
—— Leonardo da Vinci possibly consulted about the, 69
—— violent dissensions between ecclesiastics and the town of Varallo, 97
—— *Procès-verbal*, showing rate at which the sculptors were paid, 109, 110
—— smaller entrance to, 117
—— Signor Topini's inn, 117
Scotto, Stefano, his portrait, 91, 189, 204
Sculpture and painting, turning on full strength of both, &c., 69
—— integral parts of one design, 77, 79
—— the, at Varallo, would look cold and uninteresting without its colour and background, 201
Shoddy, a, bishop or two, 251
Sleep and death, easy to render, 130
Stagey, the Varallo chapels in one way are, but it is surprising how little, 87
Stella, Fermo, not, probably, a pupil of Gaudenzio, 15
Stepped gable, house with a, on fresco background, 162
Stone, resembling that which covered the Holy Sepulchre, 43, 231
Strada, della Madonna, 114
—— Cross on the, 115
Stuffed piece, treating nature as a, 85
Supers, their legitimate function, 87

TABACHETTI, his name Tabaquet, and he was a Fleming, 5
—— never even mentioned by the Rev. S. W. King, 17
—— his "Journey to Calvary," the most astounding work in sculpture, 72, 197
—— a better man, take him all round, than Michael Angelo, 72, 73, 81
—— the strongest and most robust of the Sacro Monte artists, 78
—— his "Journey to Calvary," and D'Enrico's "Nailing to Cross," 81
—— realistic, whenever he could be so, 88
—— the Titan of terra-cotta, 100
—— came from Dinant in Belgium, 101
—— sketch of his life, 99, &c.
—— his existence not known by Cicognara, Lübke, and Perkins, 99
—— Zani, Nagler, and Bartoli on, 100, 101
—— his insanity only temporary, 102, 128, 130

Tabachetti, his Vision of St. Joseph chapel subsequent to his supposed insanity, 103
—— has left descendants near Crea, 103
—— Madonna del Rosario, and head in Museum at Varallo, 103
—— summoned to Crea in 1590–91, 103
—— was buying property about Serralunga, 1600–1608, 102, 104
—— of noble birth, 104
—— his Adam and Eve chapel, 119
—— gave new heads to the Annunciation figures, 126
—— probably did the Flagellation and Crowning with Thorns chapels, 182–185
—— his Journey to Calvary chapel the most successfully ambitious work in medieval sculpture, 197
—— not a Donatello, 198
—— his "Vecchietto," 198
—— his Countess of Serravalle, 199
—— his work at Crea, 239, &c.
—— his Madonna del Rosario, 260
Taylor, Tom, "Oh, wretched," &c., 32, 33
Temptation, the present chapel, early scrawls on, 54
Terra-cotta does not lend itself to decay, 137
Theory, early artists did not rise to, 85
Three days and three nights, if they mean only 36 hours, &c., 264
Thrones valued at three figures, 109
Tibaldi, *see* Pellegrini.
Time's glory, "to set the seal," &c. ("Rape of Lucrece"), 83
Tonetti, 3, 90, 270
Too much, the, and the too little, 264
Topini, Signor, his inn on the Sacro Monte, 117
Torrotti, extract from, 25, &c.
—— rather a plagiarist, 47
Tract, a modern Italian, 127
Tunbridge Wells, Varallo like, 31
Turco, è Turco lei? 118
Tussaud's, Madame, 78

UNFAMILIAR class of work, on criticising, 79

VALSESIA, the, always quasi-independent, 27, 28
—— its people great emigrators, 29
—— character of inhabitants, and infusion of German blood, 51
—— lay out of the track of wars, 51
Valsolda, Paracca, or Bargnola, of, 145. (*See* Preface.)
Varallo inns, 24
—— climate, 25
—— Torrotti on, 25
—— resemblances to Jerusalem, 26, 49
—— perhaps still more like Tunbridge Wells, Bath, or Margate, 31
—— the most western city of Italy with an endemic art, 38
Varese, clever though stagey, 71
—— a beautiful lady at, 118
Vecchietto, a Melchizedek of a figure, 74
—— chapter on the, 214
Villains, the, of the piece, 83
Vinci, Leonardo da, possibly consulted about the Sacro Monte, 69
—— both painter and sculptor, 70
Vincius, Gaudenzio Ferrari signed himself, 91
Virgin, birth of the, and the Nativity, 255
—— you are the very smallest, 257
Visitors' book, extracts from, 33, 34
Votive pictures, old, in museum at Varallo, 123, 124

WAR, the Val Sesia generally exempt from, 51
Winking Madonna, I would as soon have a, 267
Wood never returned to when once terra-cotta had been adopted, 56
World, the, will taint all that it worships, 268

ZANI on Tabachetti, 100
—— on Paracca (*alias* Bargnola, *alias* "il Valsoldino," *alias* Bologna), 145

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